

PROCEEDINGS OF THE
101ST NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
OF THE UNITED STATES

[SUMMARY OF MINUTES]



Milwaukee, Wisconsin :: August 20 - August 25, 2000

P R O C E E D I N G S

of the

101ST ANNUAL CONVENTION

PROCEEDINGS OF THE

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

OF THE UNITED STATES

[SUMMARY OF MINUTES]

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

August 20-25, 2000

JUNE 14, 2001.—Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and
ordered to be printed

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

73-123

WASHINGTON : 2001

U.S. CODE, TITLE 44, SECTION 1332

NATIONAL ENCAMPMENTS OF VETERANS' ORGANIZATIONS; PROCEEDINGS

PRINTED ANNUALLY FOR CONGRESS

The proceedings of the national encampments of the United Spanish War Veterans, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the American Legion, the Military Order of the Purple Heart, the Veterans of World War I of the United States, Incorporated, the Disabled American Veterans, and the AMVETS (American Veterans of World War II), respectively, shall be printed annually, with accompanying illustrations, as separate House documents of the session of the Congress to which they may be submitted.

[Approved October 2, 1968.]


LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES, KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI
December, 2000

Honorable Dennis Hastert,
The Speaker U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: In conformance with the provisions of Public Law No. 620, 90th Congress, approved October 22, 1968, I am transmitting to you herewith the proceedings of the 101st National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin August 20-25, 2000, which is submitted for printing as a House document.

Sincerely,



JOHN J. SENK, JR.
Adjutant General

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE SUNDAY, AUGUST 20, 2000

PAGE

Call to Order - - - - -	-1
Advance of Colors - - - - -	-1
Invocation - - - - -	-1
In Memoriam - - - - -	-2
Introduction of Memorial Speaker - - - - -	-2
Memorial Address - - - - -	-3
Presentation of the Chapel of Four	
Chaplains Legion of Honor Bronze Medallion - - - - -	-6
Benediction - - - - -	-6
Retiring of Colors - - - - -	-7

JOINT OPENING SESSION MONDAY, AUGUST 21, 2000

All American Commanders and Outstanding	
Community Service Posts - - - - -	-8
Introduction of Helen Putnam Blackwell - - - - -	-8
Advancement of Colors - - - - -	-8
Invocation - - - - -	-9
Video Presentation - - - - -	-9
Introduction of Commander-in-Chief - - - - -	-9
Remarks by Commander-in-Chief Smart - - - - -	-10
Introduction of Mr. Mike Soika, Mayor's Chief of Staff - - - - -	-12
Introduction of the Honorable Tommy Thompson,	
Governor of Wisconsin - - - - -	-13
Greetings - The Honorable Tommy Thompson - - - - -	-13
Presentation of American Flag Sets - - - - -	-16
Presentation of VFW Gold Medal of Merit and	
Citation to Ladies Auxiliary President Lorraine Frier - - - - -	17
Response - Ladies Auxiliary President Lorraine Frier - - - - -	-18
Introduction of Secretary of Defense William Cohen - - - - -	-19
Response - Secretary of Defense Cohen - - - - -	-19
Introduction of Miss America 2000 - Heather French - - - - -	-26
Response - Miss America - Heather French - - - - -	-27
Introduction of National Voice of Democracy Winner	
- Mitchell Warner - - - - -	-31
Voice of Democracy Winner - Mitchell Warner - - - - -	-31

Introduction of Lieutenant General Kao Chung-Yuan, Veterans Affairs Commission, Republic of China	-33
Remarks - Lieutenant General Kao Chung-Yuan	-33
Presentation of Awards to 2000 All American Commanders	-35
Introduction of C. Marty Ellingwood, Supreme Commander, Military Order of the Cootie	-38
Remarks - MOC Supreme Commander Marty Ellingwood	-38
Introduction of the Honorable George W. Bush	-41
Remarks by the Honorable George W. Bush	-41
Benediction	-46
RECESS	-47

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS BANQUET
AUGUST 21, 2000

Invocation	-48
Pledge of Allegiance	48
Introduction of Commander-in-Chief Smart	-50
Remarks by Commander-in-Chief Smart	-51
Introduction of Ladies Auxiliary President Lorraine Frier	54
Remarks by National President of the Ladies Auxiliary	-54
Introduction of Miss America 2000 - Heather French	-55
Remarks by Miss America 2000 - Heather French	-55
Presentation of the Eisenhower Award, Gold Medal and Citation	-56
Remarks by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright	-57
Benediction	-63
RECESS	-63

FIRST BUSINESS SESSION
TUESDAY MORNING, AUGUST 22, 2000

Call to Order	-63
Salute to the Colors and Pledge of Allegiance	-64
Invocation	-64
Membership Drawing	-64
Presentation of Membership Citation to the Department of Arizona	-64
Presentation of Certificate of Appreciation to the 100th National Convention Committee	-65
Report of Credentials Committee	-66
Report of Committee on Convention Rules	-66
Report of Committee on Finance and Internal Organization	-69
Report of Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs	-72

Report of Committee on General Resolutions	-82
Report of Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs (Cont'd.)	-86
Presentation of VFW Political Action Committee Award	-86
Introduction of the Honorable Hershel Gober, Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Department of Veterans Affairs	-88
Remarks by the Honorable Hershel W. Gober	-89
VFW Hall of Fame Award, Gold Medal and Citation Presented to Mr. Richard Crenna	-94
Response - Mr. Richard Crenna	-95
Presentation of Check for \$2.5 million to American Battle Monument Commission	-95
Remarks by the Honorable Robert Dole	-96
Presentation by Harley-Davidson Motorcycle Company	-97
Introduction of the Honorable Chuck Hagel, Senator from Nebraska	-98
Remarks by the Honorable Chuck Hagel	-99
Introduction of Vice-President Al Gore	-103
Remarks by Vice-President Al Gore	-103
Closing Ceremonies	-107
RECESS	-107

SECOND BUSINESS SESSION

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 23, 2000

Call to Order	-107
Salute to the Colors and Pledge of Allegiance	-107
Invocation	-107
Report of Credentials Committee	-108
Report of Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs (Cont'd.)	-108
Report of Committee on POW/MIA	-114
Report of Committee on National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual	-115
Introduction of General John H. Tilelli, Jr. (Ret.) for Presentation of Commander-in-Chief Special Award	-118
Remarks by General John Tilelli, Jr.	-119
Introduction of Linda Hope	-124
Remarks by Linda Hope	-124
Presentation of VFW Armed Forces Award, Gold Medal and Citation to Alfred Rascon	-125
Remarks by Alfred Rascon	-126
Presentation of the VFW James E. Van Zandt Citizenship Award, Gold Medal and Citation to Hunter Scott	-128

Remarks by Hunter Scott	-129
Introduction of the Honorable Ronnie Shows, Congressman from Mississippi	-132
Remarks by the Honorable Ronnie Shows	-132
Presentation of VFW Distinguished Service Medal and Citation to Past Commander-in-Chief Thomas A. Pouliot	-135
Remarks by Past Commander-in-Chief Pouliot	-135
Introduction of Brigadier General Wilma L. Vaught, USAF, (Ret.), President of Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation, Inc.	-136
Remarks - Brigadier General Wilma Vaught	-136
Report of Committee on National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual (Cont'd.)	-139
Presentation by William McCarthy, VFW Post 864 Brookline, Massachusetts	-161
Presentation of Recognition Plaque to Past Commander-in-Chief Clyde Lewis by VFW Employees' Retirement Plan Board	-162
Presentation of the Buddy Poppy Display Contest Winners	-163
Presentation of Parade Awards	-164
Report of Committee on Veterans Service Resolutions	-165
Closing Ceremonies	-172
RECESS	-172

THIRD BUSINESS SESSION

THURSDAY MORNING, AUGUST 24, 2000

Call to Order	-172
Salute to the Colors and Pledge of Allegiance	-172
Report of Credentials Committee	-173
Report of General Resolutions Committee (Cont'd.)	-173
Presentation of VFW Distinguished Service Medal and Citation to Richard Trombla	-174
Response - Richard Trombla	-174
Presentation of VFW Distinguished Service Medal and Citation to Mr. David Petree	-175
Remarks - David L. Petree	-176
Presentation of the James C. Gates Distinguished Service Award to Ms. Danny Wright	-176
Remarks - Ms. Danny Wright	-177
Presentation of the Large Employer of the Year Award	-178
Remarks - Ms. Shari Millea	-178
Presentation of the Small Employer of the Year Award	-179
Remarks - Mr. Asa Burt	-180
Presentation of the National Employment Service Office Award	-180
Remarks - Mr. Jone Pate	-181

Presentation of the VFW	
Outstanding VA Health-Care Provider of the Year Award	-181
Remarks - Ms. Mary Chaffee	-182
Presentation of the VFW	
Outstanding Community Health-Care Provider of the Year Award	-183
Remarks - Ms. Lorraine Teague	-184
Presentation of the VFW Outstanding	
Volunteer of the Year Award	-184
Remarks - Mr. Ronald G. Olk	-185
Nominations for National Home Trustees	-185
Introduction of Past Commanders-in-Chief	-186
Recognition of National Sergeants-at-Arms	-186
Winners of the National Buddy Poppy Contest	-187
Introduction of Ladies Auxiliary President Frier	-190
Response - Ms. Lorraine Frier	-191
Presentation by the Department of Europe	-193
RECESS	-193
Visit of National Home Representatives	-193
Remarks - Mr. Michael Kessler	-194
Remarks by the 2000 Buddy Poppy Children	-196
Nomination of Commander-in-Chief	-199
Nomination of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief	-202
Nomination of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief	-203
Nomination of Quartermaster General	-205
Nomination of Judge Advocate General	-206
Nomination of Surgeon General	-207
Nomination of National Chaplain	-208
Closing Ceremonies	-209
RECESS	-209

FOURTH BUSINESS SESSION

FRIDAY MORNING, AUGUST 25, 2000

Call to Order	-210
Salute to the Colors, Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance	-210
Final Report of Credentials Committee	-210
Election of Officers	-211
Announcement of Council Members-Elect	-214
Announcement of Appointments by Commander-in-Chief-Elect	-215
Remarks by Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief	-215
Installation of Officers	-217
Presentation of Past Commander-in-Chief	
Lapel Pin and Gold Life Membership Card	-223
Remarks by Past Commander-in-Chief Smart	-223
Acceptance Address by Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak	-225
Closing Ceremonies	-231
Adjournment	-231

COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF, VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

(Including societies that amalgamated to form Veterans of Foreign Wars)

The Veterans of Foreign Service and the Army of the Philippines amalgamated at Denver, CO, August 1913, forming the Veterans of Foreign Wars as it is today. However, the birth of the order dates from September 29, 1899, when the first national officers were elected and the eligibility clause adopted. The original chapter was granted October 11, 1899.

* indicates deceased

American Veterans of Foreign Service

1899-1900	James C. Putnam*	.Elected at Columbus, Ohio.
1900-1901	Maj. Will S. White*	.Elected at Columbus, Ohio.
1901-1902	Maj. Will S. White*	.Elected at Columbus, Ohio.
1902-1903	James Romanis*	.Elected at Washington Courthouse, Ohio.
1903-1904	James Romanis*	.Elected at Cincinnati, Ohio.
1904-1905	James Romanis*	.Elected at Cincinnati, Ohio.
1905-1906	George Metzger*	.Elected at Altoona, Pennsylvania.
1906-1907	Charles H. Devereaux*	.Elected at Cincinnati, Ohio.
1907-1908	David T. Nevin*	.Elected at James Exposition Grounds, Virginia.
1908-1909	J. Alfred Judge*	.Elected at Lebanon, Pennsylvania.
1909-1910	J. Alfred Judge*	.Elected at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
1910-1911	Robert J. Woodside*	.Elected at Jersey City, New Jersey.
1911-1912	Robert J. Woodside*	.Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
1912-1913	Robert J. Woodside*	.Elected at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

American Veterans of Foreign Service (Eastern Branch)

1903-1904	Capt. Robert S. Hansburg *	.Elected at Altoona, Pennsylvania.
1904-1905	H.O. Kelly *	.Elected at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

(The above two organizations amalgamated September 1905, at Altoona, Pennsylvania.)

Army of the Philippines

1900-1901	Gen. Francis V. Greene *	.Elected at Denver, Colorado.
1901-1902	Gen. Irving Hale *	.Elected at Salt Lake City, Utah.
1902-1903	Gen. Irvin Hale *	.Elected at Council Bluffs, Iowa.
1903-1904	Gen. Charles King *	.Elected at St. Paul, Minnesota.
1904-1905	Gen. Wilder S. Metcalf *	.Elected at St. Louis, Missouri.
1905-1906	Col. Alfred S. Frost *	.Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1906-1907	Gen. Arthur MacArthur *	.Elected at Des Moines, Iowa.
1907-1908	Capt. H.A. Crow *	.Elected at Kansas City, Missouri.
1908-1909	Maj. P.J.H. Farrell *	.Elected at Galesburg, Illinois.
1909-1910	Col. Charles L. Jewett *	.Elected at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
1910-1911	A.H. Anderson *	.Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1911-1912	F. Warner Karling *	.Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1912-1913	F. Warner Karling *	.Elected at Lincoln, Nebraska.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

1913-1914	Rice W. Means*	Elected at Denver, Colorado.
1914-1915	Thomas Crago *	Elected at Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.
1915-1916	Gus Hartung*	Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1916-1917	Albert Rabin*	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1917-1918	William Ralston*	Elected at New York, New York.
1918-1919	F. Warner Karling*	Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1919-1920	F. Warner Karling*	Elected at Providence, Rhode Island.
1920-1921	Robert G. Woodside*	Elected at Washington, D.C.
1921-1922	Robert G. Woodside*	Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1922-1923	Tillinghast Huston*	Elected at Seattle, Washington.
1923-1924	Gen. Lloyd M. Brett*	Elected at Norfolk, Virginia.
1924-1925	John H. Dunn*	Elected at Atlantic City, New Jersey.
1925-1926	Fred Stover*	Elected at Tulsa, Oklahoma.
1926-1927	Theodore Stitt*	Elected at El Paso, Texas.
1927-1928	Frank T. Strayer*	Elected at Providence, Rhode Island.
1928-1929	Eugene P. Carver*	Elected at Indianapolis, Indiana.
1929-1930	Kezekiah N. Duff*	Elected at St. Paul, Minnesota.
1930-1931	Paul C. Wolman*	Elected at Baltimore, Maryland.
1931-1932	Darold D. DeCoe*	Elected at Kansas City, Missouri.
1932-1933	Adm. Robert E. Coontz*	Elected at Sacramento, California.
1933-1934	James E. Van Zandt*	Elected at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
1934-1935	James E. Van Zandt*	Elected at Louisville, Kentucky.
1935-1936	James E. Van Zandt*	Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1936-1937	Bernard W. Kearny*	Elected at Denver, Colorado.
1937-1938	Scott P. Squyres*	Elected at Buffalo, New York.
1938-1939	Eugene I. Van Antwerp*	Elected at Columbus, Ohio.
1939-1940	Otis N. Brown*	Elected at Boston, Massachusetts.
1940-1941	Joseph C. Menendez*	Elected at Los Angeles, California.
1941-1942	Max Singer*	Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
1942-1943	Robert T. Merrill*	Elected at Cincinnati, Ohio.
1943-1944	Carl S. Schoeninger*	Elected at New York, New York.
1944-1945	Jean A. Brunner*	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1945-1946	Joseph M. Stack*	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1946-1947	Louis E. Starr*	Elected at Boston, Massachusetts.
1947-1948	Ray H. Brannaman*	Elected at Cleveland, Ohio.
1948-1949	Lyall T. Beggs *	Elected at St. Louis, Missouri..
1949-1950	Clyde A. Lewis	Elected at Miami, Florida.
1950-1951	Charles C. Ralls*	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1951-1952	Frank C. Hilton	Elected at New York, New York.
1952-1953	James W. Cothran*	Elected at Los Angeles, California.
1953-1954	Wayne E. Richards*	Elected at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
1954-1955	Merton B. Tice*	Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
1955-1956	Timothy J. Murphy*	Elected at Boston, Massachusetts.
1956-1957	Cooper T. Holt	Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1957-1958	Richard L. Roudebush*	Elected at Miami Beach, Florida.
1958-1959	John W. Mahan	Elected at New York, New York.
1959-1960	Louis G. Feldmann*	Elected at Los Angeles, California.
1960-1961	T.C. Connell	Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1961-1962	Robert E. Hansen	Elected at Miami Beach, Florida.

1962-1963 . Byron B. Gentry*Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
 1963-1964 . Joseph J Lombardo*Elected at Seattle, Washinton.
 1964-1965 . John A Jenkins*Elected at Cleveland, Ohio.
 1965-1966 . Andy Borg*Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
 1966-1967 . Leslie M. Fry*Elected at New York, New York.
 1967-1968 . Joseph A. Scerra*Elected at New Olreans, Louisiana.
 1968-1969 . Richard W. HomanElected at Detroit, Michigan.
 1969-1970 . Raymond A. Gallagher*Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
 1970-1971 . Herbert R. Rainwater*Elected at Miami Beach, Florida.
 1971-1972 . Joseph L. Vicites*Elected at Dallas, Texas.
 1972-1973 . Patrick E. Carr*Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
 1973-1974 . Ray R. SodenElected at New Olreans, Louisiana.
 1974-1975 . John J. StangElected at Chicago, Illinois.
 1975-1976 . Thomas C. WalkerElected at Los Angeles, California.
 1976-1977 . R.D. Smith Jr.Elected at New York, New York.
 1977-1978 . Dr. John WasylikElected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
 1978-1979 . Eric SandstromElected at Dallas, Texas.
 1979-1980 . Howard E. Vander Clute Jr.* . . .Elected at New Olreans, Louisiana.
 1980-1981 . T.C. Selman*Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
 1980-1981 . Arthur FellwockSucceeded T.C. Selman, Oct. 21, 1980.
 1980-1981 . Arthur FellwockElected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
 1982-1983 . James R. CurrieoElected at Los Angeles, California.
 1983-1984 . Clifford G. Olson Jr.Elected at New Olreans, Louisiana.
 1984-1985 . Billy Ray CameronElected at Chicago, Illinois.
 1985-1986 . John S. StaumElected at Dallas, Texas.
 1986-1987 . Norman G. StaabElected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
 1987-1988 . Earl L. Stock*Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
 1988-1989 . Larry W. RiversElected at Chicago, Illinois.
 1989-1990 . Walter G. HoganElected at Las Vegas, Nevada.
 1990-1991 . James L. KimeryElected at Baltimore, Maryland.
 1991-1992 . Robert E. WallaceElected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
 1992-1993 . John M. CarneyElected at Indianapolis, Indiana.
 1993-1994 . George R. CramerElected at Dallas, Texas.
 1994-1995 . Allen F. "Gunner" KentElected at Las Vegas, Nevada.
 1995-1996 . Paul A. SperaElected at Phoenix, Arizona.
 1996-1997 . James E. NierElected at Louisville, Kentucky.
 1997-1998 . John E. MoonElected at Salt Lake City, Utah.
 1998-1999 . Thomas A. PouliotElected at San Antonio, Texas
 1999-2000 . John W. SmartElected at Kansas City, Missouri

VFW NATIONAL OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS, 1999-2000

Commander-in-Chief John W. Smart
 Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief John F. Gwizdak
 Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief James N. Goldsmith
 Adjutant General John J. Senk, Jr.
 Quartermaster General Joe L. Ridgley
 Judge Advocate General Donald W. Watts
 Surgeon General Curtis O. Bohlman, MD
 National Chaplain Fred V. Vogler
 National Chief of Staff Arthur E. Koch, III
 Inspector General John J. Zuba, Sr.
 Assistant Adjutant General & Executive Dir.,
 Washington Office Kenneth A. Steadman
 Assistant Adjutant General, Administration Lawrence LeFebvre
 Assistant Adjutant General, Programs W. Benny Bachand
 Assistant Adjutant General, Marketing Ronald G. Browning
 Assistant Quartermaster General Lawrence M. Maher
 Deputy Assistant Quartermaster General - Operations . . . Robert Crow
 Deputy Executive Director, Washington Office . . . Robert E. Wallace
 Director, Buddy Poppy & Member Services Thomas L. Kissell
 Director, Citizenship Education &
 Community Service Michael J. Gormalley
 Director, Communications Steve Van Buskirk
 Director, Emblem & Supply Department M.L. "Bud" Cale
 Director, Finance and Human Resources Robert B. Greene
 Director, General Services David L. Swindler
 Director, Life Membership & Dues Processing Robert A. Crider
 Director, Marketing Service Kevin C. Jones
 Director, Membership James R. Rowoldt
 Director, Publications & Editor, VFW Magazine Richard K. Kolb
 Director, VFW Foundation William "Bud" Meador, Jr.
 Director, VFW Properties Billy R. Weissend
 Director, Youth Development,
 Scholarship & Recognition Gordon R. Thorson
 Director, Action Corps & Deputy Director,
 National Legislative Service Sidney Daniels
 Director, Administrative Services -
 Washington Edward L. "Leo" Andrew
 Director, Public Affairs William G. Smith
 Director, Employment Service James N. Magill
 Director, National Legislative Service Dennis Cullinan
 Director, National Security & Foreign Affairs Bruce R. Harder
 National Service Officer & Director,
 National Veterans Service Frederico Juarbe, Jr.
 Administrative Assistant Russell Cutrightt
 Meeting & Events Coordinator Vanessa Kane

REGIONAL NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS,
1999-2000

DISTRICT 1	(ME, NH)	Donald W. Linscott, Jr.
DISTRICT 2	(MA, VT)	Bradley F. Reynolds
DISTRICT 3	(MD, NJ)	William A. Goode
DISTRICT 4	(DC, DE, EU)	G.P. "Jerry" Miserandino, Sr.
DISTRICT 5	(IN, MO)	Omar F. Kendall
DISTRICT 6	(VA, WV)	Bobby Walls
DISTRICT 7	(TN, KY)	John Furgess
DISTRICT 8	(GA, AL)	Ray E. Brooks
DISTRICT 9	(SC, NC)	William J. Jolin
DISTRICT 10	(OK, AR)	Eugene H. George
DISTRICT 11	(WI, IA)	Curt J. Taylor
DISTRICT 12	(SD, ND, WY)	Richard J. Belling
DISTRICT 13	(NE, KS)	Billy C. Smith
DISTRICT 14	(MT, WA, ID)	George F. Riedel
DISTRICT 15	(NM, CO, AZ)	Vincent J. Mitchell
DISTRICT 16	(LAT AM/CAR, PAC, AK, HI)	Thomas I. Elliot
DISTRICT 17	(UT, NV, OR)	Charles D. Fuller
DISTRICT 18	(CT, RI)	Ronald Rusakiewicz
DISTRICT 19	(LA, MS)	W. Hugh Long
DISTRICT A	(Pennsylvania)	Allen Q. Jones
DISTRICT B	(Illinois)	Clyde F. Davis, Jr.
DISTRICT C	(New York)	George S. Smith
DISTRICT D	(Ohio)	Craig D. Swartz
DISTRICT E	(Minnesota)	Donald L. Gates, Jr.
DISTRICT F	(Michigan)	Ernest E. Meyers, Sr.
DISTRICT G	(California)	Robert J. Maxwell
DISTRICT H	(Texas)	Alexander Vernon
DISTRICT J	(Florida)	Robert M. Sprute
Past Commander-in-Chief		Thomas A. Pouliot



John W. Smart
Commander-in-Chief
1999-2000



John F. Gwizdak
Commander-in-Chief
2000-2001

VFW NATIONAL OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS, 2000-2001

Commander-in-Chief John F. Gwizdak
 Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief James N. Goldsmith
 Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Raymond C. Sisk
 Adjutant General John J. Senk, Jr.
 Quartermaster General Joe L. Ridgley
 Judge Advocate General A. Lynn Hall
 Surgeon General Raymond W. Schlueter
 National Chaplain John F. Leonard
 National Chief of Staff Richard Branson
 Inspector General Precilla Wilkewitz
 Assistant Adjutant General, Administration Lawrence LeFebvre
 Assistant Adjutant General, Programs W. Benny Bachand
 Assistant Adjutant General, Marketing Ronald G. Browning
 Assistant Quartermaster General Lawrence M. Maher
 Deputy Assistant Quartermaster General - Operations . . . Robert Crow
 Deputy Executive Director, Washington Office . . . Robert E. Wallace
 Director, Buddy Poppy & Member Services Thomas L. Kissell
 Director, Citizenship Education &
 Community Service Michael J. Gormalley
 Director, Communications Steve Van Buskirk
 Director, Emblem & Supply Department M.L. "Bud" Cale
 Director, Finance and Human Resources Robert B. Greene
 Director, General Services David L. Swindler
 Director, Life Membership & Dues Processing Robert A. Crider
 Director, Marketing Service Kevin C. Jones
 Director, Membership James R. Rowoldt
 Director, Military Assistance Bud Haney
 Director, Publications & Editor, VFW Magazine Richard K. Kolb
 Director, VFW Foundation Wilburn "Bud" Meador, Jr.
 Director, VFW Properties Billy R. Weissend
 Director, Youth Development,
 Scholarship & Recognition Gordon R. Thorson
 Director, Action Corps & Deputy Director,
 National Legislative Service Sidney Daniels
 Director, Administrative Services -
 Washington Edward L. "Leo" Andrew
 Director, Public Affairs - Washington William G. Smith
 Director, Employment Service James N. Magill
 Director, National Legislative Service Dennis Cullinan
 Director, National Security & Foreign Affairs Bruce R. Harder
 National Service Officer & Director,
 National Veterans Service Frederico Juarbe, Jr.
 Meeting & Events Coordinator Vanessa Kane

REGIONAL NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS,
2000-2001

DISTRICT 1	(ME, NH)	Donald W. Linscott, Jr.
DISTRICT 2	(MA, VT)	William L. McCarthy
DISTRICT 3	(MD, NJ)	William A. Goode
DISTRICT 4	(DC, DE, EU)	Robert A. McGowan
DISTRICT 5	(IN, MO)	Omar F. Kendall
DISTRICT 6	(VA, WV)	Robert B. Kesling
DISTRICT 7	(TN, KY)	John Furgess
DISTRICT 8	(GA, AL)	Charles R. Stephens
DISTRICT 9	(SC, NC)	William J. Jolin
DISTRICT 10	(OK, AR)	Bobby G. Julian
DISTRICT 11	(WI, IA)	Curt J. Taylor
DISTRICT 12	(SD, ND, WY)	A.L. Ellefson
DISTRICT 13	(NE, KS)	Billy C. Smith
DISTRICT 14	(MT, WA, ID)	Donald G. Riegel
DISTRICT 15	(NM, CO, AZ)	Vincent J. Mitchell
DISTRICT 16	(LAT AM/CAR, PAC, AK, HI)	Marcus S. Butler
DISTRICT 17	(UT, NV, OR)	Charles D. Fuller
DISTRICT 18	(CT, RI)	Salvatore J. Capirchio
DISTRICT 19	(LA, MS)	W. Hugh Long
DISTRICT A	(Pennsylvania)	Allen Q. Jones
DISTRICT B	(Illinois)	Clyde F. Davis, Jr.
DISTRICT C	(New York)	George S. Smith
DISTRICT D	(Ohio)	George H. Cox
DISTRICT E	(Minnesota)	David L. Adams.
DISTRICT F	(Michigan)	Ernest E. Meyers, Sr.
DISTRICT G	(California)	Robert J. Maxwell
DISTRICT H	(Texas)	William D. Bell
DISTRICT J	(Florida)	Robert Sprute
Past Commander-in-Chief		John W. Smart

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE 101ST
NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES
MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

AUGUST 20 - 25, 2000

ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE
SUNDAY, AUGUST 20, 2000

(The Memorial Service of the 101st Annual Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held at the Milwaukee Convention Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was called to order at 8:30 o'clock a.m., with Commander-in-Chief John W. Smart, presiding. The Gold Star parents, Gold Star wives, National Officers and Past National Chaplains were escorted by the Sergeants-at-Arms.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Good morning, comrades, sisters and friends. Welcome to the 101st National Convention Memorial Service. Sergeant-at-Arms, you will prepare the hall for the advancement of the Colors.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS BARRY HOFFMAN: Yes, sir.

ADVANCE OF COLORS

(Whereupon, the VFW National Honor Guard advanced the Colors, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Please be seated. We are indeed honored to have with us the Festival City Barbershop Chorus to sing for us the "Battle Hymn of the Republic".

(Whereupon, the Festival City Barbershop Chorus sang the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" at this time.)

INVOCATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Will you all, please, stand for the Invocation by Father Senior Henry Meus.

FATHER SENIOR MEUS: Heavenly Father, creator and sustainer of all life, we ask for your grace, humility and gratitude. In this beloved land of ours, we acknowledge your great faith for the men and women who served in the armed forces, provided us with freedom and unity, and we thank you for those men and women who gave their lives to keep us free from tyranny and oppression, and they unselfishly gave of themselves in a manner similar to your son, Jesus, who gave his life that we may be free from sin.

For all veterans that are not here, and those that bear the scars of their service, God bless them at home, in the nursing homes or in the hospitals. Shower them with your love and peace.

In this convention, we ask that you instill joy and satisfaction in the hearts and minds of the men and women who served in the armed forces for providing peace, freedom and security for our nation. All of this we ask in the name of your son and our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Please be seated. I would like to acknowledge the presence of Mrs. Howard E. Vander Clute, Jr., widow of Past Commander-in-Chief Howard E. Vander Clute who passed away on January 29, 2000. Thank you, Susan.

IN MEMORIAM

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Comrades, Ladies of the VFW Auxiliary and Friends: We have met at this time to commemorate our comrades of the United States Armed Forces for the interest of their last call. The VFW Ritual provides that the audience shall refrain from applauding. The Chief of Staff will see that there shall be no disturbance during these ceremonies.

NATIONAL CHIEF OF STAFF ARTHUR KOCH: Commander-in-Chief, your order will be obeyed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: I request that the National Chaplain preside.

(National Chaplain Reverend Fred Vogler, presided during the Memorial Services performed by the National Officers in accordance with the Ritual.)

INTRODUCTION OF MEMORIAL SPEAKER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: We are honored this morning to have Chaplain Norman Oswald, the Program Manager for Pastoral Care at the Zablocki Veterans Administration Medical Center in Milwaukee. Father Oswald was ordained as a Catholic priest in 1972.

Chaplain Oswald served in parishes in Milwaukee until 1991 when he joined the Chaplains staff at the Veterans Hospital. In 1994, he was appointed Chief of Chaplain Service at the Medical Center. In addition to his duties at the Medical Center, he was appointed to the Veterans Administration Chaplain Advisory Board in 1996, and served a two-year term.

He was subsequently appointed to the National Veterans Administration Chaplain Field Leadership Conference, representing the 12th Veterans Integrated Services of Chaplains.

Chaplain Oswald will now deliver the Memorial Address for the 101st Veterans of Foreign Wars National Convention.

MEMORIAL ADDRESS

FATHER NORMAN OSWALD: Good morning, everyone. In 1972 when I was ordained, I had a hope and a dream and a promise that stemmed from the family that I grew up in. My father was a veteran of World War II, served in what was then the Army Air Corps.

He was called back for the Korean Conflict, and by then it was the United States Air Force. And I had always hoped and dreamed to follow in his footsteps and to put into my life words that were so important in his: duty, honor, God and country.

While my plans, I guess, were not God's plans, because I was not allowed to go into the chaplaincy. The Bishop would not release me. However, God has a way out, and I am now proud to say that I work each and every day serving those who have served God and country, who have lived up to those words of honor and duty.

I welcome you to our City of Milwaukee, and I also invite you to come, if you have time, to visit the VA Medical Center.

I would like to share some thoughts with you this morning as we do this memorial. I have learned from one of our Rabbis on our staff that most of us have that word "memory" a little bit mixed up. Most of us had memory up here (indicating), and as I watched many of you here this morning you revealed to me what the Rabbi told me, that memory is something that happens down here (indicating). It is a word of the heart, and that is what I would like to address today, our hearts as we remember it.

Years ago in this city, when we had one morning newspaper and an evening newspaper, there was a banner on the morning newspaper, and I paraphrase it, saying the only thing that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men and women to remain silent.

Well, our veterans, men and women, have not remained silent. They have put their lives on the line to stand for what is right and what is trust, and they have lived up to their Lord's sacrifice, which means to affirm that which is holy, that which comes from the hand of God, and that which is valued.

A number of years ago there was a cartoon in the paper, and most of my guys and gals at the VA know when I talk I am a little bit unorthodoxed. So you have to put up with me this morning. But Peanuts sometimes reveals some very deep truths that we need to ponder.

One of them took place in Windsor. I know some of you don't know what Windsor is here in Wisconsin, but we do. Lucy runs into Charlie Brown, and Charlie Brown has an absolutely marvelous caring mother, and she had wrapped him in about fourteen sweaters, ten pairs of mittens, boots and a hat, and you can barely see his face.

Charlie is proceeding to walk across the frozen lake. Charlie is burdened, and Charlie slips and Charlie falls down, and he is laying on his back like a turtle and he is calling, "Help me, help me. Will someone help me?" Lucy was walking by and she said, "Oh, Charlie, what is your prob-

lem?" He says, "Lucy, help me." She says, "Well, can't you get up?" He said, "Would you help me?" She said, "I will tell you what. I will hope for an early spring."

Thank God our veterans have never had that attitude. They did not hope for an early spring through many long winters of their lives, but they made that spring happen to so many people around this world, who have cried for help. They have affirmed the treasure, indeed, of life, liberty, freedom and justice. It is that goal common from the hand of God.

So as we remember these men and women who have gone before us and shared their stories, we really get in touch with that which is best in each and every one of us. I mentioned my father. One day my mother called me up, and my father passed away shortly before I was ordained, and my mother called me up and she said, "I would like you to come home and help me clean out that one corner of the basement. We have never gotten to it."

It is interesting, you get to this one corner of the basement that you have never gotten to, the things you discover, trash and treasures. I want you all to know my father was relatively famous for his fifteen minutes in World War II, and as we were cleaning out underneath I ran across a picture of my dad which appeared in our local paper.

My dad, as I said, was in the United States Army Air Corps. The guys back then had a message for the folks that we were in conflict with then. They will throw everything at you but the kitchen sink. Guess what? My dad brought the kitchen sink home from Germany.

That is not why I tell the story. Those of you that have been in service know when you go into service, quite often you bond with your fellows and you become closer to some of them than your own family, for they are by your side to give you strength and courage and to remind you why you are there. Again, those words, honor, guidance and service to God and country.

I mentioned we were cleaning out underneath this cupboard, and I pulled this thing out from underneath the cupboard. I said, "Well, this goes in the junk heap." And my mother said, "Give me that." When my mother speaks like that, you listen.

So I handed it to her and she began talking about my dad and his time of service in World War II. She started talking about my dad's best friend who came from a place called Piney Flats, Tennessee. I never would have known where Piney Flats was nor would I have to say I really cared if it wasn't for the story that I was to hear.

This friend of my father's from Piney Flats, Tennessee, was like my dad, a bombardier. He befriended my father; he gave my father courage and strength when he needed it. My father's best friend, who gave him strength, was shot down and presumed killed in action.

Now, as my mother was telling me the story of that friendship, sharing the memories, she was doing something to this thing that I thought was worthless. My mother also has an uncanny sense of timing, and she hand-

ed it to me and she had me taking off years of tarnish and dirt, and underneath it all was a sterling silver baby cup.

On it was the name Norman Walker, the gentleman from Piney Flats, Tennessee, my father's fellow serviceman, a man of duty and honor. And underneath that name was engraved my name "Norman Oswald", and I know why I got that name, because that man from Piney Flats had hopes and dreams and visions and values that he died for. My father wanted to be reminded of that through the life of his son.

So we gather today and throughout this convention to remember and to tell the stories that uncover the treasures of this nation and its greatest resources, the men and women who have stepped forward and sacrificed and given of themselves. There was another Charlie Brown episode. Charlie runs into Linus one day, and it is night time. Linus is carrying a little candle in his hand, and Charlie Brown says to Linus, "What is this that you have?" Linus said, "Well, you know, I heard it is better to light just one little candle than to curse the darkness."

Charlie says, "That's true, although there are those who will disagree with you, Linus." The next frame has Linus going, "Oh, you stupid darkness." Well, again, the men and women that we light those candles of hope that burned brightly and give us direction as we move through this world.

I would like to close with this reflection. This is something that was given to me a few years ago. It was a beautiful meditation. It is entitled "I Am A Veteran." We are reminded at the beginning of this reflection of something General Omar Bradley said, that veterans are God's gift to us and freedom is their gift to the world.

"I Am A Veteran."

"Oh, God, I am a veteran, hear my prayer. I shivered in that cold winter in Valley Forge and rejoiced in the glorious thunder at Yorktown. I went as the flames engulfed Washington and said never again. I wore blue and blood red. I wore gray, and I bled red, but what blood I spilled was to reunite a nation of the people, by the people and for the people.

"I am a veteran. I was at Little Big Horn and I prayed. I was at Wounded Knee and I prayed, and I prayed that the new Americas and the old Americas would one day be one people. I was there to charge up the hill at San Juan knowing that my country was emerging beyond its borders. I was prepared to make the world safe for democracy. Young and idealistic, I came to France to turn back the horrors of war and the war to end all wars.

"I am a veteran. It was with my belief that I became part of the day which will live in infinity, and once more I said goodbye to those I loved to protect my country, across the vast desert I have met the enemy. I met him on island after island and I kept my promises.

"I met him on the beaches at Normandy. I repealed him in the gates and I freed thousands from the shadow of death. I am a veteran. A small nation cried out for help and I came because others had been there for me, a nation which saved.

"I felt your presence in the jungles of distant lands. I held my head high when others called most. I put on my uniform to save them from tyranny, and today I remain ready to pledge my life, my property, my sacred honor until there will be peace and freedom on earth for everywhere and everyone. O God, I am a veteran. Hear my prayer. Amen."

(The Festival City Barbershop Chorus sang "This Is My Country" at this time.)

PRESENTATION OF THE CHAPEL OF FOUR CHAPLAINS LEGION OF HONOR BRONZE MEDALLION

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN VOGLER: We now have a presentation for John Smart by the Wisconsin Chaplain, David Sorenson, on behalf of the Chapel of Four Chaplains, a past State Chaplain to the Wisconsin American Legion, a member of VFW Post 2778, Elton, Wisconsin.

COMRADE DAVID SORENSON (Post 2778 - Wisconsin): It gives me great pleasure to be here this morning and make this presentation representing the Chapel of Four Chaplains at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. Many times I hear the Chapel of Four Chaplains as the chaplains were presented the Legion of Honor Bronze Medallion here today from the Chapel of Four Chaplains I am pleased to make this presentation.

If the Commander-in-Chief will come forward, please. John W. Smart, Commander-in-Chief of the VFW, August 20, 2000, in recognition of your service to all people, regardless of race or faith, this award symbolizes for all Americans and for all time the unity of this nation founded upon the fatherhood of one God, unity without uniformity. This is signed by the Executive Director, Kimberly B. Parrish.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you so very much.

COMRADE DAVID SORENSON: We have one other thing here yet, Commander. The medallion itself, it gives me great honor to make this presentation here this morning for you and for the VFW.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you so very, very much. Thank you all so very much. Please convey my thanks to the Chapel of Four Chaplains for all the work they have done for us and our country.

At this time will you all please stand for the Benediction by the Reverend David Sorenson.

BENEDICTION

REVEREND DAVID SORENSON: Living God, through the fire of your spirit, continue to keep the flame of hope alive in our hearts. As the baton is passed to the next generation to continue to protect and defend our nation, may the example of the veterans who have gone before, the example of courage and faith and hope continue to light the way.

May the hope which you inspire in our hearts be a flame of hope not only for us but for everyone in our nation and in our world of great diversi-

ty. Amen.

RETIRING OF COLORS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: We will now have the Retiring of the Colors.

(Whereupon, the Retiring of the Colors was performed by the VFW National Honor Guard.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Colors have been retired.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you. We will retire the Gold Star parents and Gold Star wives. Please all remain standing.

At this time I would like to acknowledge and thank the Festival City Barbershop Chorus and all the participants that continued to make this memorial program a success. Please thank them all for us.

I would like to especially thank each and every one of you in this audience this morning for arriving here at 7:30 to 8:00 o'clock for these services, to commemorate the loss of our dear friends that we have lost this year, and especially to you, Mrs. Vander Clute, thank you for being here this morning. Our love and prayers will always be with you.

We have two very exciting days ahead of us. I would like to announce that tomorrow morning these doors will open at 7:00 o'clock in the morning. As you are aware, we are going to have Secretary Cohen here tomorrow morning and we will have the Governor of the great State of Texas, George W. Bush, the Republican candidate for President of the United States.

The only way you can get through the door is to have your delegate cards around your neck. For those that have any children with you or guests with you, I ask if they want to come with you tomorrow morning, please stop by the credentials table and get these name tags for all the guests that would like to participate tomorrow morning.

I thank you once again, and I thank all the officers for their participation and all our guests. I hope you enjoy this Milwaukee Convention because they have done an outstanding job.

I now close the Memorial Service and thank each and every one of you. God bless you all.

(Whereupon, the Memorial Service was concluded at 9:30 o'clock a.m.)

JOINT OPENING SESSION MONDAY, AUGUST 21, 2000

(The Joint Opening Session of the 101st National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the 87th National Convention of the Ladies Auxiliary, was called to order on Monday, August 21, 2000, at 8:00 o'clock a.m., in the Midwest Express Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, by Adjutant General John Senk.)

ALL AMERICAN COMMANDERS AND OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE POSTS

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I am John Senk, Adjutant General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Welcome to Milwaukee. One of the most prestigious awards earned as a Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars is to be named a member of the All American Commanders team.

This year, 204 Commanders have earned the right to be called All American. They are seated over here to my left, and I would like them to stand and receive your appreciation. (Applause)

Seated behind the All American Commanders are the 1999-2000 Outstanding Community Service Post winners, represented by their Commanders and Auxiliary Presidents. Please stand and receive your recognition. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF HELEN PUTNAM BLACKWELL

Before we begin our formal agenda, I was to introduce to you a lady that was the granddaughter of the founder of our organization, James Putnam. Unfortunately, this morning she was taken ill and had to be taken to the hospital, and I ask that you keep her in your prayers.

It is now time to officially open the 101st National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Please welcome a Past VFW Commander-in-Chief, a proud Korean War veteran and this year's National Convention Chairman, from the great State of Wisconsin, Walter G. "Wally" Hogan. (Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: Thank you. Comrades and sisters, I am Wally Hogan, Chairman for this, the 101st VFW National Convention.

I welcome you on behalf of myself and all who are working so hard to make this convention a great success. We sincerely hope the time that you spend with us will renew your pride in our nation, rededicate your commitment to America's veterans and bring new excitement to your work as a member of the VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary.

Please rise as we officially open this convention with the advancing of the colors.

National Sergeant-at-Arms, you will prepare the room to advance the colors.

ADVANCEMENT OF COLORS

(Whereupon, the National Honor Guard advanced the Colors at this time.)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: For this morning's Invocation, we have the National Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Reverend Fred V. Vogler.

INVOCATION

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN VOGLER: Let us bow our heads and let us take a moment to quiet ourselves after this busy morning, to put ourselves in the presence of Almighty God, our creator. Father, we are here to give you glory and praise.

Father, we come before you to thank you for our many blessings. We thank you for permitting each of us to be here at this 101st Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States National Convention in this beautiful city of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

We thank you for the pleasure and honor of being citizens of our great country, one nation under God, the United States of America. Father, we thank you for this most wonderful year we had under the leadership of your special gifts to us, Commander-in-Chief John Smart and National President Lorraine Frier.

Almighty God, now we come before you to ask your blessings upon this opening ceremony. Let each of us feel your loving presence. Let each of us participate and do your will. Father, let it be full of your love and let us show your love to each other. Let this opening ceremony set an all-inspiring tone for our convention. We pray this in your holy name. Amen.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: Please remain standing for the Pledge of Allegiance, the National Anthem sung by Miss America 2000, Heather French, and the posting of the Colors.

(Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance was given, followed by the National Anthem being sung by Miss America 2000, Heather French.)

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Convention Chairman, the opening ceremonies for today's opening session have been performed.

VIDEO PRESENTATIONS

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: Thank you, National Sergeant-at-Arms. You may be seated. The house lights will now be dimmed for two special presentations.

(Whereupon, two video presentations were given at this time: The 50th Anniversary of the Korean War, and a presentation on the 1999-2000 "A New Century of Service Year.")

INTRODUCTION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: How about a nice hand for our National officers and our Ladies Auxiliary officers. (Applause)

It is now my pleasure to introduce a gentleman who has served the Veterans of Foreign Wars for many years. He was elected to the office of Commander-in-Chief at the organization's 100th National Convention in Kansas City, Missouri, August 20, 1999. He is the first member from the State of New Hampshire elected to this position.

John served in the United States Army from October, 1970, to April of 1973. In Vietnam, he was assigned to the 176th Assault Helicopter Squadron.

John served as the Department of New Hampshire Adjutant/Quartermaster from 1985 to 1997, and now continues to serve his Department as Quartermaster. He is currently a Life Member of VFW Post 483 in Nashua, New Hampshire. He also is a member of the Military Order of the Cootie, American Legion, Elks, Association of U.S. Army and the Retired Firefighters Association, following a 21-year career as a firefighter in Nashua, New Hampshire.

He has also served as Chairman of the Board of Managers of the New Hampshire Veterans Home since 1987. He has also served as a State Representative from Congressional District 28, Nashua, New Hampshire.

Please join me in giving a warm welcome to a man whose dedication to veterans has highlighted this first year in a "New Century of Service", Commander-in-Chief John Smart.

I present to you Commander-in-Chief John Smart from the great state of New Hampshire.

...Whereupon, the assembly extended a
prolonged standing ovation to Commander-
in-Chief Smart. ...

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: John, it is indeed my pleasure to turn over the reins of this convention to you, by presenting you with the gavel, bell and the badge. I wish for you a most successful 101st National Convention.

REMARKS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, Wally. Good morning, comrades and sisters. Can you hear me? You can't tell that I am a little excited, can you? Good morning to each and every one of you, and to you, Wally and to the Department of Wisconsin and to your Committee, thank you for a wonderful job for this 101st National Convention.

To Lorraine Frier, and all the officers of the Ladies Auxiliary, and to my officers, and to each and every one of you, I have dedicated this convention to all those brave men and women who served during the Korean War. I now ask all Korean War veterans to please stand and be recognized. Let's show our respect for their service to their country. (Applause)

One year ago, I pledged to you and to the Veterans of Foreign Wars that, with all my spirit and strength, I would never relent, or be silent, in my service to our nation's true heroes, our veterans and those in uniform who

serve America today.

One year ago, I urged you to get involved because each of you has earned the right to make a difference. This morning, I am here to say that you have made me proud. You have made a difference. You have helped chart the course for a "New Century of Service."

Today, thanks to your efforts and those of our Ladies Auxiliary, veterans and the men and women of our armed services are better off than they were a year ago. Thanks to your efforts, our programs have new vitality and, as I travel throughout this country, I have seen a new level of enthusiasm and commitment in our members and supporters. Your dedication and hard work have given the VFW's second century of service a grand and glorious beginning. For that, you have my sincere and heartfelt gratitude. (Applause)

Over the past year, we have achieved great successes together. Unfortunately, great challenges still lie ahead.

As I visited VA hospitals and VA nursing homes across the nation, I am still finding veterans who must wait weeks and sometimes months to get the treatment they need. This is especially true of veterans who need special care. Today, the VA claims process is still a major problem.

Today, some veteran's claims are taking up to 205 days to be processed before compensation begins. Too often, hearings to review the disputed claims take months, then the review boards too frequently adjudicate them incorrectly. The hearing process must then begin again resulting in further delays before the veteran receives due compensation. These processing problems must be corrected now, today. (Applause) Our veterans are suffering and, in some cases dying, while bureaucrats push their paperwork from desk to desk.

I have visited with literally hundreds of our World War II veterans, many who are seeking VA health care for the first time, but they have little prospect of getting the long-term care they need.

Dear friends, these are the very individuals who saved America and the world from tyranny and returned to rebuild the land of opportunity and prosperity that we enjoy today. We cannot — and we will not — allow them to go without the services they so desperately need. (Applause)

My year as Commander-in-Chief of the greatest veterans organization in the world is almost over. But, I will not stop and I know you will not stop working to ensure full and complete health care for all veterans.

During the past year, I have traveled overseas and here at home to meet with our brave young men and women in uniform. I wish you could feel the pride I have felt as I shake their hands, hear of their dedication and see the hope in their eyes for America's future.

Unfortunately, they remain underpaid, ill-equipped, over-deployed and continue to be a test bed for social change in our nation. In uniform, they are limited to what they can do to change their situation. I am here to tell you that they are looking to us to speak out for them. We have and we will continue to do so. (Applause)

We must continue to write, call and testify to our politicians until these issues are properly addressed. We must continue to speak up against overseas deployments where there is no clear objective, minimal commitment of resources and no clear exit strategy or time frame. We must ensure that our military resources are used for America's security and in the best national interest.

These are our sons, our daughters and our grandchildren who have willingly put their lives and their futures on the line for America and we cannot and will not let them down. (Applause)

This week, you will have the opportunity to hear from the two individuals who seek to become the next President of these United States, our President.

I do not presume to influence your decision concerning either gentleman. However, I ask you, from the bottom of my heart, listen carefully to what they have to say. Take time to review the platform of their respective parties. Make yourself aware of their past records and the future they propose for America. Then, and only then, go to the polls in November and exercise the right that America's veterans have sacrificed for. Vote and encourage everyone you know to vote. Better men than you and I have died to give us that right and we dare not fail them.

In conclusion, I want you to know what this year as your Commander-in-Chief has meant to me. I have been an active part of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the better part of my adult life. From the beginning, I have known beyond no doubt that the VFW is the best and most effective veterans service organization in the world.

You, the VFW and our Ladies Auxiliary, have done and are doing more for this nation than perhaps any other single group. I am humbled and grateful for the opportunity to have been your spokesman for the past twelve months. It has been my distinct and sincere pleasure to represent you in Washington, to the troops deployed overseas, to our fellow veterans in VA hospitals, and to America's media. You have made me proud to be counted among your ranks.

I leave with the sincere hope that I have been the kind of Commander-in-Chief that you wanted me to be. I hope I have carried your banner well and I hope I have spoken your voice effectively and with conviction. I hope you will remember John Smart as a Commander-in-Chief that cares deeply for America, for our veterans and for each and every one of you.

As I always conclude my reports or remarks to you, let me say God bless you, God bless America, and have a great week here in Milwaukee. Thank you, comrades, sisters and friends. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF MR. MIKE SOIKA, MAYOR'S CHIEF OF STAFF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Milwaukee will be the home of the VFW National Convention for this year and next year. If you have not discovered it already, Milwaukee has a lot to offer its visitors. Here to bring

greetings from Milwaukee's office of the Mayor is the Mayor's Chief of Staff, Mike Soika. I like it when a plan comes together. (Laughter) I know the Governor is here.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HONORABLE TOMMY THOMPSON, GOVERNOR OF WISCONSIN

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Our next guest is a veteran, having served in both the Wisconsin National Guard and the Army Reserve. He began his political career with his election to the Wisconsin General Assembly in 1966, serving as Minority Leader and Assistant Minority Leader.

Elected Governor of Wisconsin in 1986, he is currently serving his fourth consecutive term. He is a Past Chairman of the National Governors' Association; the Republican Governors' Association, and the Education Commission of the States. He is the current Chairman of the Council of State Governments and the Amtrak Board of Directors.

I want to personally thank Governor Thompson for his kindness to the VFW as the Chairman of the Republican Platform Committee. Governor Thompson personally met with VFW staff members to hear our concerns regarding veterans and military issues. After reviewing and understanding our concerns, they were incorporated in the party platform. For this and on behalf of all veterans, the military and their families, I say thank you, Mr. Governor.

Now, please welcome a true friend of America's veterans, the Honorable Tommy Thompson, Governor of Wisconsin.

GREETINGS - THE HONORABLE TOMMY THOMPSON

GOVERNOR THOMPSON: Thank you so very much. Thank you, John. Thank you for your leadership, your passion and your direction. The Auxiliary, to all the members, Miss America, I thank you. I thank you for being the great Americans that you all are.

I am very honored to be with you today at the first Veterans of Foreign Wars National Convention of this century and the first one in Wisconsin in about 50 years. I welcome you to Milwaukee on behalf of the Mayor and to the great State of Wisconsin. Please, ladies and gentlemen, help our economy. Spend some money.

When I look out over this audience, I see an array of individuals, but you all have something very much in common. You are the true American heroes. You are more deserving of our respect and admiration than any athlete, movie star, politician or other celebrity.

You represent the spirit of America, the spirit exemplified by President and former soldier, Teddy Roosevelt. He once said, "No man is worth his salt who is not ready at all times to risk his body, to risk his well-being, to risk his life in a great cause."

Some of you served in foreign lands during World War II. That war was the pivotal event of our century. The men and women that won that war made a contribution to our country that will never again be equaled. Recently, there has been a renewed interest in World War II history. Movies like *Saving Private Ryan*, *"The Thin Red Line"* have vividly portrayed the hardships endured by our World War II veterans.

Although World War II veterans are receiving the attention they deserve, our lasting tribute has eluded them, a memorial in Washington, D.C., which I think is badly needed, and with your help we will succeed and we will get it done. (Applause)

However, this will change soon, thanks to that nationwide effort. Wisconsin is proud to do its part. We set out to raise \$332,000, led by my wonderful Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Ray Boland. We have these dog tags we sell for a buck apiece, and I gave him twenty dollars and I asked for change, and he said, "That's just a contribution, Governor."

Harley-Davidson just gave \$250,000 for the World War II Memorial Center on Saturday. (Applause) This monument is going to be a fitting tribute to our World War II veterans. Succeeding generations of American veterans have maintained the legacy of those World War II veterans.

Many of you here today served in Vietnam. This conflict is still a hotly-debated topic. But that in no way diminishes the bravery, the selfless sacrifice and the honor of the Americans who fought in Southeast Asia. Others of you served in the recent conflicts, in the Persian Gulf, Kosovo, Bosnia, or in other peace-keeping missions.

The men and women who assumed this awesome task have remained vigilant in lonely outposts far from home. You have my thanks and admiration. Let's make sure that our military is prepared to fight when they need to fight any place in this world.

All veterans, no matter when they served, where they served or in what capacity, deserve our internal thanks, and I thank you. I think the Korean veterans are the ones today after fifty years that need to be recognized, the forgotten war. It is very near and dear to me.

On June 25th, our nation observed the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of the Korean War. This conflict lasted more than three years. The battles were brutal and the conditions deplorable. During that 37 months of the war, 54,000 Americans died.

One of those killed in action was Mitchell Red Cloud, a native American from a rural community in West Central Wisconsin. Just before dawn, he was positioned in front of his company's command post when he detected the approach of Chinese Communist forces. He gave the alarm.

Then he immediately began firing at the charging enemy. His accurate and intense fire checked the assault and gained time for his company to consolidate its defense. He maintained his firing position until he was severely wounded. Refusing assistance, he pulled himself up to his feet, wrapped his arm around a tree and continued to fire until he was fatally wounded.

His heroic act stopped the enemy from overrunning his company. For his gallantry above and beyond the call of duty, his award is the Medal of Honor. Like Mitchell Red Cloud, all of you, and all of those who served in the Korean War, helped stem the tide of Communist aggression in Asia.

In memory of my brother, Charles, who was wounded several times serving as a Marine for thirty-some months in Korea, in the Chosen Reservoir, I dedicate my veterans speeches to him. He served throughout the entire war, and like his comrades, the incredible pain and suffering he went through.

But I want all of our Korean War veterans here today to know they are not forgotten. Because of the efforts of our Korean veterans and those that came before them and after them, this nation is the greatest country on earth, the sole remaining super power, thanks to you and thanks to all of you for what you have been able to accomplish. (Applause)

But today, all of you, rightfully could have rested on your laurels when the fight had ended, but your service did not end at the time of discharge from the military, absolutely not, because you are leaders. After you returned home, you continued to serve your nation, your state, your communities in so many ways.

I couldn't begin to list all of the great works that the VFW has accomplished since it began more than a century ago. It continues today under your great leader, John Smart. Each day the VFW and Auxiliary members perform acts of service that go unnoticed.

You visit the sick in VA hospitals. You speak to school children about patriotism and you teach appreciation for our flag, and the flag is sacred and should not be destroyed and burned. For all that you have done, while you have worn the military uniform, and for all you have done when you have donned the VFW cap, I personally salute you.

I realize you face numerous challenges in trying to sustain your Posts and your membership. Our down-sized military means fewer veterans which makes recruitment very difficult. But I urge each of you and your leadership to keep trying to keep this organization alive and vital.

We need you now more than ever. We need you to continue to advocate for better health care and other services for veterans. We need you to make our veterans aware of the benefits that they have earned and, yes, we are entitled to and should get in each state in America.

Here in Wisconsin, we have a tradition of providing numerous benefits and services for our state's veterans. We are continuing to improve our veterans' programs through the efforts of my secretary who was voted by all of his peers in the veterans' departments across the country as the number one veterans secretary in America, my secretary, Ray Boland, who is here, who started the first program for homeless veterans. We have set it up now and it is being copied in other states in America.

Both Ray and I have testified in Congress for homeless veterans and for better medical care for veterans, and we will continue testifying in Congress until every veteran in America gets what they are entitled to, what they deserve and should have. And we will fight until they get it.

I just sponsored a resolution with all 50 Governors in Pennsylvania at our annual meeting saying we are going to join with the VFW and continue our united efforts to make sure that we serve the veterans better. We have accomplished much, but we have much more to do.

We can reach our lofty goals because of organizations and your leadership and veterans just like you in every community in America. When called to serve, you took a solemn oath to give your own life, if necessary, to protect the lives of your fellow citizens.

You were willing to give up your own freedom so others could be free. What a noble cause. That experience taught you to understand why freedom is so critically important to Americans. Former prisoner of war Everett Alvarez, Jr., once said, "You never know how sweet freedom can be unless you have lost it for eight and one-half years."

Now, you work tirelessly on behalf of your fellow veterans in your communities and because of you and what you did years ago, and what you are doing today and will do tomorrow, we are a better nation and a better world, and the last remaining super power in this country. God bless all of you, God bless the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and above all, God bless America. Thank you. I salute you. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF AMERICAN FLAG SETS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: It is now my pleasure to introduce Sharon Peterson, the Ladies Auxiliary National Patriotic Instructor, presenting flag sets to Mike Soika and Governor Thompson. Let's give them a warm round of applause. (Applause)

NATIONAL PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR SHARON PETERSON: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. Comrades, Sisters, Guests and Friends: I have some words for you to pay heed to. I have been kicked, trampled, burned and shot full of holes. I have fought battles but I prefer the untroubled air of a world at peace.

I represent the freedom of humanity, and I shall fly high, thundering in silence for the whole world to hear. My gentle rustling in the breeze sounds out the warning to all who would bury me forever. That lull stands the population dedicated to liberty.

For those who have perished for my right to freedom of flight, for those that will die and, indeed, for those who will live, I stand as a symbol of freedom, loving people. I have been carried into battle in far away lands, always for the cause of freedom.

I am blood stained, torn and many times wearied and saddened by the thousands who have paid the supreme sacrifice. Do not let it all be for nothing. Tell me the brave all have died for a worthwhile cause. Be proud of what I represent and display me for all to see.

Whether you call me Old Glory, Stars and Stripes, or the Star Spangled Banner, I shall fly forever as the symbol of your freedom, as I did for your ancestors and as I shall do for your heirs. I am your flag. God bless our

nation that we are free to fly this symbol of freedom. (Applause)

Governor Thompson, it is my honor and a privilege on behalf of our National President, Lorraine Frier, and the members of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to present you with this flag set. We hope it will be displayed proudly and with honor in the surroundings of your office for all of Wisconsin to view.

GOVERNOR THOMPSON: Thank you. Thank you very much. I can assure you that it will be in my office in Madison by 3:00 o'clock this afternoon when I return, and I will proudly salute it each and every morning I walk into that office. Thank you so very much.

NATIONAL PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR PETERSON: The Mayor's representative is not here as of yet, but we also have a presentation of a flag set for the Mayor of Milwaukee. I am sure he will display that with pride and dignity for you that live here. Thank you very much.

PRESENTATION OF VFW GOLD MEDAL OF MERIT AND CITATION TO LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT LORRAINE FRIER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: I know every Commander-in-Chief believes that the President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars is the most special. I, too, believe that about Lorraine Frier and I am certain I can prove it.

Even prior to her accepting the presidency of our Ladies Auxiliary, she was known to be a force to be reckoned with. Bright, articulate and outspoken, she hit the ground running with her commitment to patriotism and to the Ladies Auxiliary.

Over the past year, she has raised her organization to new standards of commitment and dedication. Her energetic and aggressive approach to the duties of her office have established new standards by which Presidents of the Ladies Auxiliary will be judged. I am very proud of her and I know you are as well.

To receive the VFW Gold Medal of Merit and Citation, please welcome a great patriot and my "Mrs. Wonderful", the President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Lorraine Frier. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Commander-in-Chief is presenting the Gold Medal of Merit and this Citation to Lorraine Frier, National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, 1999-2000.

"In special recognition of her untiring dedication to our country and in sincere appreciation for her exhilarating leadership as evidenced by the exceptional contributions of the Ladies Auxiliary to the programs and purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Her 'Free to Fly' spirit swept the country and renewed the commitment to the aims and goals of the Ladies Auxiliary.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the Official Seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 21st day of August, 2000." This has been signed John W. Smart, Commander-in-Chief,

and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General. (Applause)

RESPONSE - LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT LORRAINE FRIER

LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT FRIER: What can I say? Commander-in-Chief John Smart, my "Mr. Wonderful". I have to let you all in on a little secret, however. When we were on the cruise, my daughter gave him another name, and that was "The Big Kahuna".

So I mentioned this to my lovely Past President and line officers the other night at a meeting, and one of them commented that a year ago he was "Mr. Wonderful" and he ends up as "The Big Kahuna". But he is always my "Mr. Wonderful".

Comrades and sisters, and our very distinguished guests that we have with us today, I am very honored and very, very pleased to accept this very special award from the Veterans of Foreign Wars. However, I don't accept it just for me, I accept it on behalf of all of my ladies in the Auxiliary, because they are the ones that do the work; they are the ones that have the dedication, they are the ladies of the greatest Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

It has been an exciting year of accomplishments, both for the VFW and the Ladies Auxiliary. It has been a year of many firsts. It has been my distinct pleasure and honor to serve all of you, but more importantly, to serve with my "Mr. Wonderful", John Smart.

Our convention marks the 86th year of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. We have been partners ever since. I told the community activities honorees this morning at breakfast they were there because it proves once again that the Posts and the Auxiliaries working together spell success.

Our Ladies Auxiliary is very proud of our legacy of service and our dedication to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I would like to especially thank once again all of my ladies for your dedication and love, and I would like to thank all the comrades for the help that you have given to us because once again for the twelfth consecutive year the Ladies Auxiliary has raised over \$3 million for cancer aid and research. (Applause)

We are very, very proud of everything we have achieved because we have done it together, and once again joining together spells success for you, for the national organization and for our beautiful country. God bless each and every one of you. God loves you dearly, because I certainly do.

Thank you so much, Commander. You are a very wonderful friend and my "Mr. Wonderful". I hope you have the most successful convention ever. God be with you each day and I love you dearly.

...Whereupon, the assembly extended a
prolonged standing ovation. ...

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Lorraine, never change, will you, please.

INTRODUCTION OF SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WILLIAM COHEN

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: It is indeed an honor and privilege this morning to introduce a gentleman who serves as Secretary of Defense. Mr. Secretary, before I introduce you, may I echo the words of all our members of the VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary.

I want you to know, sir, that we have some of the finest, brightest, most dedicated men and women who serve in the armed forces of the United States. I can let you know, sir, we are very, very proud of each and every one of them. Thank you, sir. (Applause)

William S. Cohen was sworn in as the nation's 20th Secretary of Defense on January 24, 1997. He previously served three terms as the U.S. Senator from Maine and three terms in the House of Representative from Maine's Second Congressional District.

As a Senator, he was a sponsor of the G.I. Bill of 1984. His efforts led to the creation of the Rapid Deployment Force, which later became the Central Command, and the Maritime Pre-Positioning Program, both of which were key to America's success in the Gulf War. He has been a key factor in strengthening U.S. counterintelligence efforts and defending against foreign political and industrial espionage. He has received numerous awards for his work on behalf of our military personnel.

Comrades, sisters, friends and guests, please welcome a friend of our men and women in uniform and a friend of America's veterans, the Honorable William S. Cohen, Secretary of Defense. (Applause)

RESPONSE - SECRETARY OF DEFENSE COHEN

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE COHEN: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief Smart, everyone's "Mr. Wonderful", for your warm words and your leadership of this great organization. Let me also extend our words of congratulations to Heather French, Miss America, for all that you have done on behalf of our veterans and our soldiers, and we look forward to a very special ceremony later this year.

Lorraine Frier, the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary, congratulations on your award as well. You have just done an outstanding job and as you pointed out you worked together. You bring together all of the forces that help support our forces in the field and the veterans who have served, so we are truly indebted to you and the Ladies Auxiliary as we are to the veterans themselves, and also the members of the VFW and all that you do.

Janet and I were just talking as we were looking out into this vast audience how proud we are to be here amongst those of you who have done so much, not only for the veterans but for those who served and the contributions you make to humanity, the charitable efforts that you undertake. We are truly proud to be here to share just a few moments with you today.

Also, I want to say that you have been such a powerful voice, not only for the veterans but everybody who serves today in uniform. You do so by

standing up for our forces, their families, their quality of life, by sustaining the ties of friendship that bind this extended family together in such extraordinary fashion and by ensuring that the fundamental principles at the heart of our democracy are preserved and passed on to future generations.

I also want to say on a personal note of privilege that I am delighted to be here today to address this distinguished gathering, but also because this afternoon you are going to be honoring my wife, Janet, for her extraordinary work on behalf of all who serve in uniform today.

I can think of few, if any, who have been more active and none more committed to the cause of service of our members in the uniform and those who have served in the past, than my wife, Janet Langhart Cohen. And I wanted to be here today to pay special tribute to you. (Applause)

Ladies and gentlemen, I can't see all of you, I can feel you out there in the audience. I must say that Janet and I have not had an opportunity to address an audience this large since we were privileged to help kick off the Indy 500 with their 500,000 patriots.

I want to say that in the audience as we spoke, and then we are able to take the lead car around the lap and I recall that day very vividly, both of us do, because we had a Harrier that flew over all the crowd and then did a 360 in front of everyone there that day.

I recall the words of everybody who was speaking and passing by with the roar of that crowd and everybody firing their engines. They looked up and they saw that Harrier and they said, "That is the sound of freedom, and thank God, those planes are ours." (Applause)

I can't tell you how proud we felt at that particular moment and virtually every day that we are privileged to serve this country. I must also tell you that whenever I address a new audience, and certainly one of this size, I feel a little bit like Henry Ford, who after having made all of his millions in this country decided he wanted to go back to his father land in County Cork, Ireland.

His wealth had long preceded his arrival. So when he finally got there, there were a group of local town officers, and they were looking for a contribution to help in the construction of a local hospital. Ford was quite accustomed to be touched in that family, pulled out his checkbook and made out a check for \$5,000.

The next day in bold print, in the local press, it said, "Ford Contributes \$50,000 for the Construction of the Local Hospital." The town officials were duly embarrassed. They came rushing to Ford and they said, "Oh, Mr. Ford, we are terribly sorry. A mistake has been made, it had to be a typographical error, and we will be happy to see to it that a retraction is printed in tomorrow's paper."

Ford said, "Wait a minute. I think I have got a better idea. You give me one wish and I will give you the balance of the \$45,000." They said, "That is an offer we can't refuse. Whatever it is you want, we will give it to you." He said, "I want, when that hospital is finally completed, to have a plaque over the entranceway with a quote taken from the source of my choice."

They said, "It is done." He gave them the check for \$45,000. The hospital was built, it is there today, and it has a quote taken from the book of Matthew. It says, "I came unto you as a stranger, and you took me in." So, I want you to know I come unto you a little bit as a stranger today. I hope you will take me in but not quite in that fashion.

First, I want to say and make one point. When I decided to leave public service after over a quarter of a century of serving in public office, I never expected to be called. I never expected to receive a call from President Clinton.

I was on my way out the door into the privacy and the anonymity of private life, and I got a call from the White House saying, "Would you be willing to serve as my Secretary of Defense?" I asked the President at that time, I said, "Why do you want to do this? You are a Democratic administration and I am a Republican."

He said, "I want to send a signal; I want to send a signal to the country and to Congress when it comes to national security there is no party label. We are not Republicans, we are not Democrats. It is not a question of moving left or right, Republican or Democrat. It is really a moving forward. I want to send that signal."

I said, "Mr. President, under those terms, I am happy to go back into the public service." I want you all to know it has been the greatest experience of my life and that of my wife, Janet. Every day that we go to the Pentagon, we are uplifted.

It is the most exciting, extraordinary experience that one could ever hope to achieve to be the civilian head of the greatest military on the face of the earth. We are grateful every day that we visit.

I want you to know that we have done a lot of traveling. I have traveled almost 700,000 miles during the past three and one-half years. Janet has been at least on 300,000 to 400,000 of those miles. We have been to Bosnia, to Kosovo, to Korea, to the Gulf, to the deserts of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

I want you to know how proud we are and how proud you should be of the men and women who were serving us. They are serving without complaint, they are serving with distinction. They are happy to be doing the job that they are doing. They are helping to spread the flag of freedom the world over.

And today, more than any other time in the history of the world, more people are sleeping under that blanket of freedom than any time in the history of the world thanks to our men and women in the military. I know there is always controversy in dealing with the military.

When I first took office, I looked at what was happening, what we were doing, and we were on a downward descent. Frankly, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the Soviet Union, there was a tremendous demand for peace.

I heard it when I was on Capitol Hill and serving in the Senate. My constituents in Maine were demanding it as were people the country over,

saying now that we no longer have this visible enemy on the horizon, we need to restructure and downsize.

We need to start pouring more of our resources into building our economy and to modernizing for the future with a smaller, more capable, more agile, more lethal force. So spending started to go dramatically lower. When I arrived in office, frankly, I took a look at what we had and I saw that Congress and the administration had taken the highest figure of what they could agree upon on what we should spend for national security and was told essentially this is what Congress and the administration have agreed on, and that is likely to be the number for the foreseeable future.

Well, after just 18 months, we decided that wasn't enough. We have begun the largest sustained increase in our military spending in a generation. We were looking at \$43 billion being spent for procurement, an all-time low. We now, this year, have gone in just three and one-half years, gone from \$43 billion to \$60 billion.

In five years, we will be at \$70 billion, and climbing in the future in order to recapitalize and rebuild this wonderful military that we have. So what we have done, we have looked at the men and women and said, you know, we can never pay them enough but we can pay them more.

That is precisely what we recommended and what we have done. We have now secured the largest pay raise in a generation. We now have returned that retirement benefit from 40 percent back up to 50 percent. We are now focusing on rebuilding our housing and our health-care system.

As a result, we are starting to see retention and recruitment increase once again. It has been a tough environment. It has been a very tough environment. We have got the strongest economy we have had in over two decades, and we are competing for the same people that the private sector wants. They want the people that we want as well.

So, they can pay two, three, four times as much. So we have got to draw from that same pool and not only draw them in but then hold them. So recruitment, retention is now starting to stabilize and increase as a result of what we have been able to do on a bipartisan basis.

I again come back to the point I am not here as a Republican, I am not here on behalf of the Democratic administration, I came here today to simply talk to you, all of you who have supported our military, the contributions you have made as members yourself, but what you do in terms of trying to sustain this great military that we have today.

That is the reason I wanted to be here today to talk to you, to tell you, yes, we can always do better. National defense is certainly a subject matter which is open to debate and improvement, and hopefully that will be the case whatever administration comes in next year.

But I want you to know something. We have the finest, the best led, the best equipped, the best educated, the finest fighting force in the history of the world. We have that today. (Applause)

I can point to any place on the globe, but I want you to think back just about a year ago. We were waging a war in Kosovo. It seems like a lot

longer in terms of the time frame. But a year ago we waged the most successful air campaign in the history of the world. I want you to think about it. We had 38,000 sorties that were flown during that campaign. We lost two aircraft and no pilots. That is a record that has never been equalled.

Then let me say to Saddam Hussein, or anyone else who wants to challenge the United States, Milosevic, or anyone else, Saddam has been put into a box and if he tries to move out of that box in any way, threaten his neighbors, he is going to be hit and hit hard.

We have been able as a result of the commitment we have made globally to help stabilize the world for peace and security and prosperity, and that is the reason. That is why we are fully deployed. That is part of our shape to respond and prepare strategy.

We need to be fully deployed and to send the signal to all of those in the world that we are there not to conquer territory, we are not there to try to grab land, we are there to promote stability, because where there is stability an investment will follow.

If investment follows, it has a chance to develop and promote prosperity. If you have prosperity, you have a much greater chance of promoting democracy. When you have democracy, you have less chance for conflict and warfare. That is why we are fully deployed around the world.

That is why we have 100,000 people spread throughout the Asia Pacific region. Why are we there? Because if we were not there, who would fill the vacuum? If we were to pull our forces out tomorrow, who would move in the Asia Pacific region? Would it be China, Japan, India, Pakistan? Who would move to fill the vacuum and what would that mean towards stability in that part of the world?

The same applies for Europe, where we have 100,000, the Gulf, 23,000. Yes, that puts a strain and burden upon our country, but we are a super power and we have to continue to always examine what does that mean, what are the benefits, what are the burdens?

Are we prepared to assume those benefits and burdens? If we look at the history of what we have done during the past fifty years, you say we are the leader for freedom. Every other country looks to us as the model, the Statue of Liberty holding up that flame saying this is the country whose ideals we want to emulate.

If you look across the globe, you will find that freedom is in the ascendency. Every country, be it Europe or Central Asia, they are looking to the United States, saying we are wanting to embrace free market ideas. We know through a free market we are able to prosper in a way that we could never do under the old Soviet concept of a centralized economy.

Yes, it is costly, it is burdensome. Can we do better? You bet. Can we improve in the future? We need to. But I hope that during the course of this year and next year, whoever is in office, that we always maintain that commitment to serve the men and women who are serving us, and you play a vital role in that.

You who have served and you who have served as the models for them,

you are the ones who help carry the torch on behalf of the United States. I want to thank you for all of them.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my job as Secretary of Defense not only to talk about current threats to our security, and there are a number. I mentioned Saddam Hussein and I mentioned Milosevic. There may be others I can talk about today. What we are looking at is what I call a summer power paradox.

Mainly, there is no other country that can challenge us directly. There is no other country that has the capabilities that we do, be it ground forces, be it warships, be it our aircraft. No other country can challenge us directly.

They look for indirect ways to challenge us, asymmetrical types of conflicts. That comes in the form of either chemical, biological or even cyber. Those are the kinds of threats we are seeing emerging today and we will have to face tomorrow.

To give you an example, there are probably at least two dozen countries or more that are seeking to develop weapons of mass destruction, and have the means to deliver them. So what we have to do is to intensify our anti-proliferation types of measures to cut down on the technology that so many of either our friends or allies or adversaries are helping to spread around the world. That is a big challenge.

Then to deter those weapons of mass destruction from ever being used against our troops or against our population. So chemical, biological, we have to be concerned about that. We have to be concerned about terrorists, those who are being supported by people like Osama Bin Laden, and we know that threat is out there.

We saw the bombing of our embassy just a year or so ago in East Africa. We know that the same groups are seeking to develop and acquire chemical and biological weapons. We know that a group in Tokyo, a few years ago, released sarin gas in a subway. We know that same group was trying to release a chemical weapon as well against American forces.

We know that Osama Bin Laden is trying to acquire weapons for mass destruction. We know the bombing of our Trade Center a couple of years ago, they were also experimenting with chemical weapons. All of that is out there and we have to be prepared to fight against that.

We know that cells are now being formed by other countries, professionals dedicated to finding ways to interrupt our infrastructure. If you could shut down our financial system, if you could shut down our transportation system, if you could cause the collapse of our energy production and distribution systems just by typing on a computer and causing those means, those links to this globalization to break down, then you are able to wage successful warfare.

We have to be able to defend against that. We are taking these measures. This morning is not the time for me to go through on a case-by-case demonstration of all that we are doing. Let me just talk about a couple. We

are concerned that, yes, some country will seek to release a chemical or a biological agent on American soil sometime in the future; that a poet some time ago said just imagine a man clutching a little case, walks out briskly to infect a city whose terrible future has just arrived. We are anticipating that kind of terror.

We are preparing our citizens by going out to 120 different cities, preparing those who will be required to respond to a chemical or biological attack. We are doing all of those things in anticipation of the kinds of threats that we are likely to face in the future.

So, I want you to know that we are not only holding onto the present conflicts to look at what we have to defend against today, but prepare ourselves for the kind of conflicts that we are likely to face in the future.

I want you to know once again that our men and women in uniform are performing magnificently. They are doing everything and more that we are asking from them. I wanted to be here today to say that to all of you. The sword of technology is Toffler.

He reminded us more than 25 years ago, he talked about future of shock, that we are going to have the winds of change sweep across our country, our culture, our ideals. And we have seen that take place. He said that technology has the potential to benefit all of mankind, and we know that.

Today technology is empowering the average citizen in ways that none of us contemplated just ten, twenty or twenty-five years ago. But this technology has two edges to this sword. The hand that wields it, as Toffler pointed out, can sever with the wrist that is holding it.

It is a double-edge sword. We have to be very, very concerned about how we are empowering our citizens, our businessmen and women, our consumers. We also have to be concerned about it not being turned and used against us. So we are preparing for that eventuality as well by devoting vast resources to developing the capability of protecting our infrastructure, protecting our citizens and protecting our soldiers.

I feel like I am a former Senator just warming up. As you know, Senators have the capacity to speak at length. I have put away my senatorial robe as such and assumed that as a chief executive for the Pentagon.

I want to conclude this morning by just again telling you how very proud I am to be in this position. I never imagined I would be here. I never thought that anyone would call me and ask me to serve in this capacity, and I will tell you once again my wife and I have never, ever had the opportunity to be around people who are so devoted to duty, so dedicated to their country, so patriotic, so hard-working, so gifted as we have in the military today; and we are terribly, terribly proud. We have been blessed to have had this opportunity.

We also had the opportunity just a couple of months ago to attend the opening of the D-Day Museum in New Orleans and Steven Ambrose had orchestrated that. He also had Steven Spielberg, Tom Hanks and others who arrived to participate in this great opening.

I don't know how many of you have read the book by Steven Ambrose, his many, many books, but the one always that stayed with us is "The Citizen Soldier." In the end of that book, "The Citizen Soldier", he talks about the greatest generation and which Tom Brokaw was also there to participate in that.

When he talks about the greatest generation in "The Citizen Soldier", he said at the very conclusion, "How was it? How was it possible for this country of ours so diverse, and at that time disorganized in terms of its military might, take on this mechanized evil that was going across the entire country of Europe? How were we able to defeat that enemy?"

He said it all came down to the citizen soldier. He said the citizen soldier who knew the difference between right and wrong, and he was unwilling to live in a world in which wrong triumphed. So, he fought and we prevailed, and all of us are the grateful beneficiaries of their sacrifice.

Ladies and gentlemen, many of you in this audience were a part of that greatest generation. You have been part of generations that have followed. You have held up the torch of liberty and freedom and all of us here are the external beneficiaries of what you have done. God bless you. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for taking time out of your busy schedule to be here with us this morning. I can assure you, Mr. Secretary, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars will stand shoulder-to-shoulder with you to do whatever it takes to give our young men and women the very best it needs to care for them and their families while they are in harm's way. Thank you again, Mr. Secretary.

INTRODUCTION OF MISS AMERICA 2000 - HEATHER FRENCH

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: One of the most enjoyable aspects of the past year for me has been to meet this next young lady. In one short year, she has become the favorite little sister to every veteran in America.

Miss America 2000, Heather French, is the daughter of a disabled Vietnam veteran. She has chosen to direct the spotlight of her title toward awareness, funding and volunteerism for homeless veterans' programs.

For the past year, she has traveled more than 20,000 miles a month, sharing her passion for America's homeless veterans' programs. The VFW is proud to have been a part of that effort.

Together, Heather and the VFW have brought much-needed attention to homeless veterans' efforts in Little Rock, Boston, Tacoma and Kansas City. Following this convention, we will continue that effort to ensure that America is aware of its homeless veterans and how we can help.

I am certain that no other single individual has done more to bring attention to the plight of homeless veterans than Heather French. For that reason, I am honoring her this morning with the VFW Gold Medal of Merit and Citation for her support of homeless veterans.

My comrades, sisters and friends, please welcome the lady who will be the veterans' Miss America forever, Miss America 2000, Heather French.

...Whereupon, the assembly extended a
prolonged standing ovation. ...

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The Gold Medal of Merit and this citation awarded to Heather French, Miss America 2000.

"In sincere appreciation for her commitment as an advocate for our nation's homeless veterans by creating an unprecedented awareness of the struggles and pains facing these proud defenders of America's freedom. Her tireless efforts to bring aid and comfort to all veterans and her willingness to share her spotlight with these forgotten heroes earns her the love and admiration of the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and adds a gleaming jewel of patriotism and compassion to her crown of Miss America.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 21st day of August, 2000." This has been signed by John W. Smart, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - MISS AMERICA - HEATHER FRENCH

MS. HEATHER FRENCH: Thank you so much. It is such an honor to be recognized by family. I don't say just friends, but I say family, because you welcomed me into not just your arms but into your hearts. In Los Angeles, as the gentleman that introduced me said she may be Miss America, former Miss Kentucky, but Heather French is a veterans' daughter.

That placed upon me the most precious title that I have ever received, even above being Miss America, because it made me responsible, it made me accountable for your lives. It made me responsible to teach a nation how to care for you and your family and for future generations so that we can pass on a legacy of respect to our children.

I dare say that above and beyond the threats internationally as the Secretary has so eloquently put it, we have one on our own soil that is a threat, and that is of the spiritual. That is of hopelessness amongst some of your brothers and sisters.

That is a threat that we cannot afford in our American nation. We cannot afford broken spirits. I have spent this past year, and there are so many wonderful memories to reflect on. I have seen the spirit of your Madam President, Lorraine, who has been such a role model for a wonderful drive to teach your ladies how to rise above.

And the National Commander, what can I say? Every time I am around I have grown to love him as your Madam President has as "Mr. Wonderful." He always has a smile on his face.

Secretary and Mrs. Cohen, what role models you have been for not just caring about the umbrella that protects us all, but caring individually about our veterans and our soldiers. It is because of you that they are proud to be American veterans and proud to be American soldiers. Thank you.

I have embarked upon a wonderful mission this year. On September

18th, although, yes, I was proud to be named Kentucky's first Miss America, I was proud to be named your Miss America. That must be the Kentucky crowd in the back.

On September 18th, when I took on that crown and that title, I began a mission that started when I was four years old. You see, as a young person I was so fortunate to know the price of freedom. At four years old, my father took me into my first VA hospital in Cincinnati, Ohio. Where is my Ohio crowd? (Applause)

And it was there that I learned the greatest lesson, and that was where your issues are concerned, where you are concerned and your family, it is better to listen not just with ears. Anyone can do that. But we need to listen with the heart.

We need to know that 25 million American veterans are more than just a statistic, that you are individuals; unique stories, unique experiences. I got a chance to learn about other families who are struggling like my family was because of my father's disabilities and his struggles.

I got a chance to see children who were asking the same question I was, and that was why is this happening to my dad? Why is this happening to my mother, my aunt, my uncle, my brother, and my sister? And it spurred in me a fire that burned so bright that I joined the Girl Scouts and I started working in the VA hospital and with veterans service organizations like the VFW.

My grandfather was a Post Commander of the VFW in Augusta, Kentucky, and I learned firsthand the mission that you were doing. My father raised me with such respect that when I went to college I started giving back into the community in Cincinnati.

I started to look at homeless shelters and I got my second dose of reality. That was when a Vietnam veteran came walking up in my doors with a ball cap on and he said, "I am here to sign in for a bed." I thought how is it possible? You are a veteran. He said, "I have been homeless for more than twenty years."

When I saw that man, I saw my father. My heart broke in two and bled for the 275,000 homeless veterans, your brothers and sisters, that are on the streets. I say sisters, because 10,000 homeless women veterans are on the streets today with their families.

It spurred in me another mission, and that was to find out why in a country as wonderful as the United States is, we have such an economic surplus that we have never seen, yet our American veterans, our heroes, my greatest heroes, could not find a place to lay their head to rest.

So when I went for Miss America it put in me a new drive to become a national advocate, to teach the nation how to care, to show the nation that all of our veterans have not come home, that we have yet to reach above and beyond and to reach behind to bring veterans to the forefront.

We have got to show a nation, and especially our young people, that it is every U.S. citizen's concern to care for you, because you fought for a piece of that American pie that so few of you have been able to achieve that

American dream.

I am here today to tell you that we are embarking upon a wonderful century. We are going to show a nation together. With the Ladies Auxiliary, my family and the members of the VFW, we, together, will overcome that spirit of hopelessness that has reigned for way too long among some of your brothers and sisters. (Applause)

I want to show you a crown. I know a lot of people when they think Miss America is coming they expect me to come in with the crown on my head, and I don't want to disappoint anyone, so I brought the crown with me. I want to share with you why I don't wear the crown but why I carry the crown.

This crown that I gained on September 18th was not gained for my purpose. As your Madam President and your National Commander can tell you, 20,000 miles a month definitely is not for my purpose. The frequent flyer miles can be for my purpose.

However, 20,000 miles a month is for the opportunity for you to have a voice, and by gaining that voice of Miss America I gained a platform that gave me the right to be heard. Every stone in this crown represents who you are; every sparkle represents a veteran across this country and those living abroad, those who have not come home.

A gentlemen in Texas asked me if he could pick out his own stone. That is how sure he was that one of these represented him. I did have to share with him that it is interesting how the different branches of the service wage war against each other and pick the different stones in the crown.

I am not sure if you understand why the Marines always pick the big stones in the crown. Somebody needs to relay that to me. However, I must tell you when I was in Des Moines, Iowa, shortly after that, I had the privilege of talking to the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, and the Women's Army Corps for 1942 to present.

Yes, a wonderful group of women. And when three of the first female generals in the Army come up to you and they want the big stones, I wasn't about to be ready to say no. So, now, the Women's Auxiliary Corps gets the big stones.

This crown is more than just a decoration. It is more than just my trophy of achievement. This crown represents the possibilities of a brighter future, better health care, better benefits, the right to know what you are entitled to, the right to be taken care of.

This represents hope, this represents what tomorrow can be and the legacy that we can pass on to our children. I want to encourage you with a story. Many of you in this audience have one of these presents I am about ready to present to you. A gentleman in Augusta, Kentucky, came up to me, a disabled Vietnam veteran, and he said, "Heather, on the days that you get tired", because he understood that not every day is the sun going to shine, and sometimes where there are clouds there will be rain, and not every day is it easy to log another frequent flyer mile.

But this gentleman bestowed upon me a gracious gift to remind me of

why I fight, to remind you of why you have banded together in this special group of the VFW and Ladies Auxiliary. This gentleman handed me his Purple Heart, and it is a gift that I have carried with me every day on my tour of duty as Miss America 2000. (Applause)

I have been able to show this all across the nation, but most importantly, I have been able to testify with this before congressional committees in our nation's capital, because there has been too long a disconnection between our American public and you, our veterans and families.

While this Purple Heart represents the physical wounds and the scars that you achieved during combat during your service to this country, being willing to pay the ultimate sacrifice. This Purple Heart represents the inward barriers that some of you harbor, the war that rages still within you; the night terrors my father had for 28 years and unable to sleep a restful sleep because four of his best friends died to bring him home so he could raise a Miss America.

Those inward disabilities are what need to be taken care of. You deserve the best treatment that our country has to offer, because not only among you is the greatest generation but all of you are the greatest population of Americans that we will ever know, here now and in the future when our soldiers come home to become one of you.

It is time that we offer you a comprehensive healing of taking care of you from the inside out by creating a patriotism in this country that we have not seen for decades, by making every day a Veterans Day, not just that on November 11th. (Applause)

In closing, what can I say? Honestly, you have been my biggest support this year. I will always be proud to be the daughter of a veteran, a granddaughter of a veteran, and just because on October 14th I pass on my title to Miss America 2001, that doesn't mean, one, that the work has stopped and, two, it doesn't mean I have passed my voice.

I will continue to work with you through our Homes for formerly Homeless Veterans that we started this year, offering one home per month to a formerly homeless veteran, and his and her family. That will continue into the future. I will continue to work on the Hepatitis C tour for veterans that we embarked upon called "Fighting The Silent Enemy Hepatitis C."

And I am blessed at 25 to be able to say my full-time job will be taking care of you from here on into the future. It has been my passion and I dream of great things for us in the future together.

So, God bless you as we embark together on a brighter future. From this day forward, we will walk and we will achieve, and we will set an example of love and of patriotism, because you deserve the best we have to offer. God bless you, God bless America.

...Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation. ...

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, Heather. On behalf of all of the members of our organization, thank you for bringing your love and your spirit for America's true heroes, our fellow veterans. Thank you,

Heather.

INTRODUCTION OF NATIONAL VOICE OF DEMOCRACY
WINNER - MITCHELL WARNER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Over the past fifty-three years, the Voice of Democracy contest has enabled high students from across the country and overseas to think, write and speak out for freedom and democracy.

Today, these students now compete for over \$139,500 in national scholarships, not to mention over \$2.5 million in awards and scholarships given by Posts, Districts, Departments and their respective Ladies Auxiliaries. These VFW scholarships enable many young Americans to continue their education in colleges and universities of their own choosing.

We are pleased to have with us today the 2000 First Place National Winner in the Voice of Democracy contest.

He graduated from Provo High School in Provo, Utah, was sponsored by VFW Post 4918 in American Fork, Utah, VFW Post 5787 in Springville, Utah, and VFW Post 6169 in Payson, Utah, along with their Ladies Auxiliaries.

Here to present his award-winning essay, "America's Role for the Next Century", the 2000 First-Place National Voice of Democracy Winner and the recipient of the \$25,000 T. C. Selman Memorial Scholarship, Mitchell Warner. Please welcome him. (Applause)

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY WINNER - MITCHELL WARNER

MR. WARNER: I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and your Commander-in-Chief John Smart and your Ladies President Lorraine Frier. It has been an honor and a privilege to be able to get to know you and to receive this award.

I thank you from the bottom of my heart, and I pray that as I deliver this speech that I have written for you that I may relay to you somewhat of my gratitude for you who have sacrificed your all for my freedom.

1945. Berlin has been divided. The western sector is cut off from the rest of the free world, surrounded on every side by communist armies. West Berliners look for shelter in bombed out buildings and scramble desperately to find something to eat. Then, almost miraculously, allied pilots, risking their lives, begin to airlift food and supplies every day through hostile communist air space. And Berlin survives.

Among these courageous pilots is Gail Halverson. While unloading supplies, young Halverson is drawn to the barbed wire fence surrounding Templehof Air Base in West Berlin. There he sees the frightened faces of children for whom hope is all but lost.

Wanting to help them, he collects his fellow pilots' gum and candy rations, ties them to handkerchief parachutes, and drops them to the waiting children as he flies over West Berlin. Word spreads of this young pilot's unauthorized generosity. The story of the Candy Bomber captures the

world's imagination.

Soon candy companies throughout the free world begin shipping gum and candy to Templehof Air Base. Mail bags filled with thank-you letters and returned parachutes from the children of West Berlin overflow Lieutenant Halverson's mail slot. The operation grows until it becomes a recognized unit of the United States Air Force. During a single year, young Halverson and his squadron dropped 23 tons of candy to the imprisoned children of West Berlin.

To those children, this young American pilot gave more than a few moments of pleasure. To them and to the rest of the oppressed world, he gave hope. Day after day, looking up at that American Flag painted on the sides of the planes overhead, these children were assured that there is a country that cares. A country where citizens live in freedom, choose their own leaders, and act generously towards the rest of the world. This instilled hope in these children, hope that one day their country, too, might be free. In the hearts of others around the globe watching the drama in Berlin, the simple act of a young American pilot responding to the need he saw, created hope and the sweet possibility of freedom and democracy.

Today, there are still blockaded Berlins. All across the world men, women, and children are yearning to be free. America's role in the next century must be what it has always been — to kindle and fan the flame of hope in oppressed people that their dreams of freedom might be realized.

As Americans we must combine our simple acts to maintain the standard of freedom and democracy for the world. Simple acts, like making certain that we vote in every election for dedicated people who know the difference between right and wrong. Working to make our community safe. Learning and passing on those stories from our history that tell of the heavy price that patriots paid for our freedom. Teaching each other the responsibilities of citizenship. Serving as volunteers to help those in need. These are things patriots do. These are things you and I can do. And you know what, they are not that hard. In fact, they are as simple as dropping candy to the children of West Berlin.

I visited with Gail Halvorsen. He repeated to me the words of children pleading with him as winter was closing in, "Keep flying, even if you cannot land your planes. We can survive without rations, but if we lose our freedom we may never get it back."

Keep flying. That's what the world is asking America still. Keep helping us win and preserve our freedom. Keep doing what you've always done to be an ensign to all those who seek liberty.

Every child that caught a parachute caught hope, hope for freedom, hope for democracy, hope for peace. The simple act of a young American pilot responding to the need he saw created hope, the first step towards the nation's freedom. I have come to understand that the simple things you and I do make America the nation that can give hope to all people.

This must be the role of America in this next century: to be the standard bearer of hope for freedom and democracy, to all the world.

God bless you, God bless America. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL KAO CHUNG-YUAN,
VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMISSION, REPUBLIC OF CHINA

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Each year, for some 25 years, we have had the opportunity to have a bond and a friendship with a true partner in the Veterans Affairs Commission from Taipei, the Republic of China. I can tell you this past year when I had the opportunity in July to visit with them and to see what they do in their country for their fellow veterans in providing medical care, housing, job opportunities, and I listened to them to say they learned from us, well, I have to say to you now, General, we probably could learn from you. I am so proud of the things that you do for your country and your fellow veterans.

One of the things that makes the Veterans of Foreign Wars unique is our close relationship with our veterans organizations around the world. Perhaps none of these relationships is warmer than our relationship with the Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China.

The Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China has been successful in creating employment and development programs that have provided immeasurable benefits to the military veterans of that nation. For more than 20 years, the VFW is proud to have been a part of encouraging those programs.

We are pleased to reaffirm our pledge of brotherhood and comradeship with this outstanding group this morning.

Please join me in welcoming the Vice-Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China, Lieutenant General Kao Chung-Yuan.

REMARKS - LIEUTENANT GENERAL KAO CHUNG-YUAN

LIEUTENANT GENERAL KAO CHUNG-YUAN: Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you very much for your very warm welcome.

Commander-in-Chief Smart, Officers and Members of the VFW, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen: Good morning. First of all, I would like to give my special thanks to Commander-in-Chief and also my good friend, John Smart, for inviting us to attend your National Convention and also for giving me such an opportunity to address in front of you.

On behalf of General Chung, Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China, I bring you greetings and congratulations on the occasion of your 101st National Convention which is being held here in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

For myself, I feel so honored and privileged to be in the company of this distinguished group of American veterans who have devoted their untiring efforts to the cause of justice, freedom and democracy. Your sacrifice and your contribution to the security of the free world can never be repaid.

Today, I am very proud myself to be here to salute your efforts and sacrifices. We come to learn from your strong points. We come to renew our

friendships. We especially are pleased with the brotherhood association of our two organizations. It is because our association is based on solid position of common goals and ideals.

Being a veteran myself, I believe veterans are the spices of love, enthusiasm, patriotism and justice. We care for our family; we care for our society; we care for our country; and we care for the whole world. Where we were inactive service, we ourselves fought for the freedom and dignity of our fellow countrymen.

Now, even though we are retired, I believe that we still give our full support to the forces. We have never regretted what we have done for our country. And I strongly believe we are forever prepared when our country needs us. This is what veterans are to me.

That is why we, the two organizations, are so close together. From the people of the Republic of China, I bring particular thanks to the VFW for the encouragement which you have given to our country. My fellow veterans, thank you. Your support for the diplomatic recognition of the Republic of China, for selling advanced weapons, for re-entering the Republic of China into the United Nations, are deeply appreciated by the citizens of the Republic of China.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank you all for your kind donations for our relief operations after the devastating earthquake which occurred on the 1st of September of last year. I thank you very much for this.

On March 18th, the Republic of China held a second direct presidential election. Although that campaign was particularly spirited, but there was no violence. It was a hotly contested three-way race. The new President from the opposition party was inaugurated in a smooth transition on May 20th, proving that the Republic of China has attained the mature democracy status along with the United States.

We look forward to further enhancing the relationship. We will continue the exchange of visits and information. By sharing the valuable experience, I am confident that two organizations could surely improve the efficiency and the effectiveness of the respective veterans programs.

In conclusion, I give you my best regard for a most successful National Convention, and I wish every one of you the best health, happiness and success. Thank you for your precious time. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you very much.

In the meantime, I will present a medal from our country to Commander-in-Chief John Smart. I will have Jonathan to read the citation.

MR. JONATHAN CHUNG: Ladies and gentlemen, my dear friends. It is my great honor to read a citation accompanying the medal presentation.

"Mr. John W. Smart, Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has distinguished himself by his outstanding contributions to the promotion of friendly relations between the peoples of the United States of America and the Republic of China, and to the enhancement of ties and cooperation between the veterans of our two countries.

"In appreciation of his meritorious service, Commander-in-Chief Smart

is presented the Order of the Cloud and Banner with Cravat by the government of the Republic of China, in accordance with Article 11 of the Armed Forces Decoration Regulations." This has been signed by the Minister of National Defense.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: General Kao and Jonathan, thank you so much and continue to do the things that you do for the heroes of your country, because you are a credit to every veteran that has worn the uniform. Have a safe trip home.

PRESENTATION OF AWARDS TO 2000 ALL AMERICAN COMMANDERS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Ladies and gentlemen, one of the most prestigious achievements in the Veterans of Foreign Wars is to be a member of the team of All American Commanders. To join this honored group, a Commander must reach a minimum of 100 percent of the previous year's membership and place in its Membership Division in accordance with the assigned allocations.

We will now read the list of honorees, Posts, Districts and Departments All American Commanders. I will now ask the Adjutant General to assist in this program and also the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief and the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: From the Department of Alabama, Albert F. Pound, Jr., Post 49; James W. Wheeler, Post 218; Roland L. Day, Post 668; Billy Stilwell, Post 2702; Lawrence O. Sepanski, Post 4190; Edward H. Melton, Post 5180; Charles H. Ayers, Post 6837; Gregory K. Usrey, District 1, Post 2702; and Albert F. Pound, Jr., Post 49, District No. 9.

From the Department of Alaska, Robert R. Klotz, Department Commander, Post 9785.

From the Department of Arizona, George T. Diehl, Sr., Post 7968; Leroy H. Servin, District 10, Post 1677; and John I. Halstead, Sr., Department Commander, Post 3632.

From the Department of Arkansas, Mark A. Cybulski, Post 9095.

From the Department of California, Carl F. Guimbellot, Post 85; James S. Rosa, Post 1622; Joe A. Carranza, Post 2415; John E. Cummings, Post 2805; Robert G. Pitchford, Post 3788; John O. Lipe, Post 3982; Gerard J. Fields, Post 4647; Fred O. Egeler, Post 6024; Allen W. Housewright, Post 7041; Louis A. Eckels, Post 7263; Stephen L. Glandon, Post 8254; Michael McKelroy, Post 9223; Wendy J. Sehr, Post 9999; Dannie E. Boston, District 1 - Post 1512; Robert E. Chermak, District 2 - Post 9557; Jay C. Villareal, District 12 - Post 9752; Kenneth R. Cotner, District 13 - Post 10293; Shirley M. Shaw, District 17 - Post 4647; Henry B. Giddens, District 22, Post 2987; Jack F. Cullari, Sr., District 23 - Post 2266; and Richard L. Eubank, Department Commander, Post 85.

From the Department of Colorado, Earl J. Havens, Post 3917; Emidie J. Mazzella, Post 4051; John C. Donahoo, Post 4061; Lawrence L. Hein, Post

8149; Earl J. McEldowney, District 5 - Post 6461; and Emil E. Pischel, Department Commander, Post 4171.

From the Department of Connecticut, Alfred F. Perugini, Post 7330.

From the Department of Delaware, George M. Blades, Post 7234 and Walter J. Kula, Department Commander, Post 3257. Mrs. Dorothy Kula is accepting posthumously for Walter Kula, her husband.

From the Department of Europe, John C. Neilson, Post 2566; Robert E. Mann, Post 10692; Miguel A. Rios, District 1 - Post 2566; and George W. Eby, Department Commander, Post 10692.

From the Department of Florida, John E. Pritchard, Post 706; Arthur L. Owen, Post 7909; Ronald C. Kerr, Post 10097; Chris M. Ellis, District 6 - Post 3270; Harvey F. Eckhoff, Department Commander, Post 7674.

From the Department of Georgia, Thomas C. Hovatter, Post 665; Clayton D. Fuson, District 3, Post 10558; and William R. Johnson, Department Commander, Post 658.

From the Department of Hawaii, Raymond G. Carvalho, II, Department Commander, Post 7078.

From the Department of Idaho, Robert B. Finney, Post 63; Charles T. Shepherd, District 5, Post 63; and T. C. Brock, Jr., Department Commander, Post 63. That is three All-Americans from Post 63.

From the Department of Illinois, Timothy C. Peters, Post 805; Tiger Miller, Post 1059; Ronald J. Aten, Post 1197; Charles C. Oelrich, Post 1739; William M. Wolff, Post 7539; Max E. Snook, Jr., Post 8455; John A. Lenhardt, District 14 - Post 6504; Larry J. May, District 19 - Post 2801; and Anthony J. Kosik, Department Commander, Post 1583.

From the Department of Indiana, William G. Price, Post 1114; Robert E. Green, Post 1154; Jerry B. McIntyre, Post 2695; William A. Thien, Post 3281; Fred L. Shelton, District

2 - Post 1154; Terry H. Thomas, District 8 - Post 2950; and David R. Cole, Department Commander, Post 1832.

From the Department of Kansas, McKinley Smith, Post 8773; and Leon Shaw, Jr., Department Commander, Post 704.

From the Department of Kentucky, Brian J. Duffy, Post 1170, and Robert L. Pack, Post 10281.

From Latin America and the Caribbean, Darryl S. Dalley, Department Commander, Post 3822.

From the Department of Louisiana, Richard L. Cook, Post 3106, and Thomas J. Kijak, Post 5951.

From the Department of Maine, Frederick A. Libby, Jr., Post 7738, and Joseph H. Gallant, Jr., Department Commander, Post 832.

From the Department of Minnesota, Thomas G. Martin, Post 5555; Richard E. Dobson, District 6 - Post 6843; and Steven P. Van Bergen, District 7 - Post 6587.

From the Department of Mississippi, Douglas M. Ball, Post 4526; Clarence Q. Reynolds, District 1 - Post 4526; and Kenneth W. Boggs, Department Commander, Post 6731.

From the Department of Missouri, Cecil J. Reno, Post 4541.

From the Department of Nebraska, Lorenz Montoya, Post 1581; George A. Lee, Post 1652; Earl L. Jones, Post 2503; Leroy Z. Clausen, District 3 - Post 4996; Louis C. Statz, District 5 - Post 4688; and John L. Lossi, Department Commander, Post 3704.

From the Department of New Hampshire, William F. Champagne, Department Commander, Post 1698.

From the Department of New Jersey, John F. Kane, Jr., Post 493; Dennis L. Green, Post 4189; Fritz A. Mueller, Post 9503; George N. Kollarik, District 12, Post 6063; Alvin Y. Allen, Jr., District 13 - Post 2071; and G. Bruce Eveland, Department Commander, Post 7677.

From the Department of New Mexico, Renee T. Barron, Post 401.

From the Department of New York, Eugene G. Ward, Post 2501; Roland C. Abare, Post 7062; Joseph Gagnon, Post 10957; Allan E. Davenport, District 3 - Post 1019; Edward C. Bassett, District 5 - Post 524; and Philip A. Smith, District

8 - Post 2670.

From the Department of North Carolina, George R. Harsch, Post 670; Daniel J. Jones, Post 2843; Don N. Hancock, Post 5631; Mark R. Sandmann, Post 9133; Oliver T. Nicholas, District 4 - Post 7315; John W. Shelander, District 8 - Post 670; and Arthur A. Shull, Department Commander, Post 2843.

From the Department of North Dakota, Cletus J. Schmidt, Post 1326.

From the state of Ohio, William Cline, Post 693; Joseph Cooper, Jr., Post 7174; William K. Seagraves, Post 9582; William E. Cansler, Jr., District 3 - Post 3283; and William H. Gaston, District 6 - Post 4111.

From the state of Oklahoma, Vernon L. Long, Post 539; Gary Keener, Post 2270; Lowell O. Mounce, District 6 - Post 1320; Harlan J. Bjorgo, Department Commander, Post 9265.

From the Department of Oregon, Daniel W. Wakefield, Post 81; Nicholas J. Urhausen, Post 293; Thomas G. Laing, District 13 - Post 9448; and Lynn L. Dennis, Department Commander, Post 2624.

From the Pacific Areas, B. K. Hubbard, Post 2485; Robert W. Zaher, District 7 - Post 2485; and Emory C. Russell, Department Commander, Post 9892.

From the Department of Rhode Island, Salvatore J. Capirchio, Department Commander, Post 2396.

From the state of South Carolina, Oliver Smith, Post 4262; William Ragan, Post 10256; Richard L. Copeland, Post 10420; and Gerald T. Pothier, Department Commander, Post 10256.

From the State of South Dakota, Robert A. Brewbaker, Post 1273.

From the Department of Texas, Rafael Dominguez, Post 812; Merle L. Todd, Post 1839; Billy W. King, Post 2034; C. W. Buchanan, Post 3892; Billy J. Duke, Post 3893; Rod G. Devore, Post 3907; Robin L. Walker, Post 4372; Ronald C. Williams, Post 6796; Melvin B. Voss, Post 8552; Donald Hollingsworth, Sr., Post 8577; Gilberto Romero, Post 9186; Eddie D.

Alexander, Post 9191; Joseph D. Sortino, Post 9192; Jose I. Hernandez, Post 9195; Harold L. Owens, Jr., District 11 - Post 8134; Orville L. Hensler, District 14 - Post 8577; Guy V. Layton, District 19 - Post 3893; Robert De La Vega, District 20 - Post 4700; Joe B. Ward, Jr., District 29 - Post 8571; Jimmie D. Cantrell, Department Commander, Post 9168.

From the state of Utah, Laurie A. Charry, Post 8307.

From the Department of Vermont, Rene E. Rocheleau, Department Commander, Post 778.

From the State of Virginia, George C. Farrar, Jr., Post 9808, and Paul T. Moore, Department Commander, Post 4491.

From the Department of Washington, Denis C. Selberg, Post 224; Terrell C. Newby, Post 505; Timothy J. Smith, Post 718; Jeff B. Lackey, Post 933; Thomas C. Leonard, Post 2886; Reginald E. Watts, Post 2995; Ricardo E. Wilson, Post 9430; Gary W. Hulsey, District 11 - Post 1949.

From the Department of West Virginia, James M. Burkhart, Post 1212; Eugene C. Bess, Post 5581; and Randall L. Bare, Department Commander, Post 6669.

INTRODUCTION OF C. MARTY ELLINGWOOD, SUPREME COMMANDER, MILITARY ORDER OF THE COOTIE

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF QWIZDAK: A trip to almost any VA hospital will reveal the importance of the work of the Military Order of the Cootie. Each year, the Cooties spend thousands of hours bringing a moment of pleasure to our hospitalized veterans. Their commitment to "keeping them smiling in beds of white," is a grand tribute to the service and sacrifice of all veterans.

Our next guest was elected Supreme Commander of the Military Order of the Cootie at that organization's 80th Supreme Scratch in Kansas City in August of 1999.

He is a career Air Force veteran, serving from 1968 until 1991, and earning his VFW eligibility as a recipient of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal from his service in Korea in 1972. He is a life member of VFW Post 4343 in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and a life member of Pup Tent 3PT2 in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Please welcome the Supreme Commander of the Military Order of the Cootie of the United States of America, Charles Martin "Marty" Ellingwood.

REMARKS - MOC SUPREME COMMANDER MARTY ELLINGWOOD

MOC SUPREME COMMANDER ELLINGWOOD: Good morning, everybody. Any Cooties out there? Welcome to the 101st Convention for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Senior Vice Commander-in-chief John, thank you for that introduction.

Distinguished guests, VFW National Officers, Lorraine, you and your wonderful organization, welcome. Comrades, Cooties and Sisters, before I start I would like to ask again for the wonderful procession that was just completed up here, for all of the American Team of Commanders, to give

them another round of applause, please. (Applause)

At the beginning of my term of office, I had the pleasure of addressing the 100th delegation of this fine body on behalf of the Military Order of the Cootie. Now, I am honored again and humbled to address the 101st delegation of our parent organization, the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

With the administrative year drawing to a close, I still firmly believe that the Military Order of the Cootie is but an extension of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I told you last year that I am a VFW member first and then a Cootie, and that has not changed. There is no competition between the VFW and the MOC at any level, and the Team 2000 would set new goals and records. Well, we did and we are proud.

The great majority of you representing the Veterans of Foreign Wars are members of the MOC. Sometimes we forget that we are the official honor degree of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Team 2000 emphasized and insisted that our accomplishments in the MOC complement the programs and the work of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

We directed our entire organization down to the Pup Tent level to work in concert with their individual VFW Posts and support all their Post activities and programs. I am proud to say that we did that. While working hand-in-hand with our Posts, we eliminated most of the competition and prejudice between both organizations.

We became united and promoted the common good of both organizations. The prodigal son came home and we again became family. I am extremely proud of this accomplishment. This year we have closed the gap between our deceased and new and reinstated members with a full three-percent gain over last year.

In 17 locations throughout the United States and overseas, comrades, the Veterans of Foreign Wars have organized new Pup Tents, representing a 300-percent increase over previous years. We streamlined our operating procedures at the Supreme Headquarters at a cost savings of over \$28,000 to our membership.

I am proud to report a 98.3 percent in Cootie membership this year, the closest we have been to 100 percent in many, many years. We have worked hard with the VFW and within the MOC. To become a Cootie, you must pull double duty. Although we had some of our own unique programs which we actively pursued this year, we enthusiastically supported every program which the VFW Posts were engaged in.

We had some special programs designed to support our Posts, such as the MOC/VFW Booster Program, which clearly defines MOC participation. Membership is the lifeline of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and, therefore, it is also the lifeline in the Military Order of the Cootie.

I am proud to announce that the Military Order of the Cootie reported signing over 9,000 new and reinstated VFW members this year for Commander-in-Chief Smart. That is over 300 percent of last year and over 265 percent over the last four years.

I thank the Grands of California, North Carolina and Texas for helping

us to do that, because they alone contributed over 4,000 of the 9,000 members, which is nearly 45 percent of what we have done this year. So congratulations. Thirty-one Pup Tents reported in the VFW Booster Program with 11,000 Cooties working over 11,000 activities, giving over 146,000 hours and driving nearly half a million miles to do it.

That is \$1.8 million in donated time and gas. That is not including the \$69,000 in donated gifts and cash to VFW Posts from Pup Tents. We have many other programs at the Supreme level and at the Grand level which supported a myriad of activities, including VFW blood drive programs, and support the VFW National Home for Children, where our support comes from at least seven different programs or special projects.

We proudly continue to support our children at the VFW National Home. As in the past, our primary program was our hospital program. We actively participated in hospital visitations, volunteer work programs all over the globe. Wherever there was a Cootie, there was hospital work being done.

The Supreme Hospital Program operated within the highest traditions of the Military Order of the Cootie and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States in VA Medical Centers, community nursing homes and other similar facilities, including domiciles of the sick or needy veterans.

We did so by performing over \$10 million in hospital credits this year. That is over \$10 million in credits. One-third of that came from the Grand of Michigan. Thank you, Grand of Michigan. I am proud to say we watched over our comrades in beds of white. The MOC supported the POW and MIA programs with the VFW this year. We also support the VFW/PAC and Operation Uplink with financial donations.

Again, thank you very much for the opportunity to speak, and I know that the incoming Supreme Commander Ken Cole and his staff will continue this fine relationship that we have developed. God bless each and every one of you, and have a very fine and safe convention. Again, thank you, VFW National Headquarters and staff for your support.

Lorraine, wherever you are, I want to quote Chief Smart, I love it when a plan comes together.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, Marty, and please thank on behalf of all our members in the Supreme Convention for all the things they do to keep them smiling in beds of white.

At this time we will have some announcements by the Adjutant General. We have been told that we were within ten or fifteen minutes of the arrival of the Governor, so we ask you to please stay in the hall and in your seats. Thank you for your cooperation.

Adjutant General Senk.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Commander-in-Chief, you made my announcement. The Governor is about ten minutes out. We are going to have the band play a musical interlude for you for your entertainment while he is coming. We ask that you do not leave the hall. If you do, you will not be allowed to re-enter. So, please, just be patient and the Governor will

be here soon.

Comrades and sisters, ladies and gentlemen, please welcome our Commander-in-Chief John W. Smart and the Governor of the Lone Star State of Texas and the Republican presidential candidate, George W. Bush.

...Whereupon, the assembly extended a
prolonged standing ovation. ...

INTRODUCTION OF THE HONORABLE GEORGE W. BUSH

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you all very much. My comrades, sisters and friends, prior to introducing our special guest, I would like to recognize three individuals that are traveling with him to show their support. Earlier this morning we received greetings from the first individual I will recognize.

As I stated formally in my introduction at that time, he is a true friend of American veterans. Please join me in welcoming once again the Honorable Tommy Thompson, Governor of Wisconsin.

The next man needs no introduction to a VFW audience, or a friend of veterans. He is the former all-American, long-time Chairman of the House of Representatives Veterans Affairs Committee. Please welcome a true veterans advocate, Mr. Veteran, Mr. Honorable G. V. "Sonny" Montgomery.

...Whereupon, the assembly extended a
prolonged standing ovation. ...

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Our last distinguished guest served for more than 30 years in his beloved United States Marine Corps. He has the reputation, both while in uniform and now retired, to not always doing what is politically correct.

He did what was correct for the men to be proud in uniform. Please join me in welcoming the former Commandant of the United States Marine Corps, General Charles Krulak.

Every four years, the Veterans of Foreign Wars enjoys a unique opportunity. We are privileged to be visited by the major candidates for our nation's highest office, the presidency of the United States. This morning is one of those opportunities.

After a successful business career, George W. Bush was elected Governor of the State of Texas. Now in his second term, Governor Bush has earned a reputation as a compassionate conservative who shapes policy based on the principles of limited government, personal responsibility, strong families and local control.

He served as an F-102 pilot for the Texas Air National Guard. He is the first Texas Governor to be elected to consecutive four-year terms in November, 1998, winning 68.6 percent of the vote.

I am indeed honored to present Texas Governor George W. Bush, the Republican candidate for President of the United States.

REMARKS BY THE HONORABLE GEORGE W. BUSH

GOVERNOR BUSH: Thank you all very much. Thank you. Commander, thank you very much for your invitation to be here. Thank you for your kind remarks and thank you for that warm welcome. I know you join me in thanking Commander Smart for his leadership of this very important organization. I, too, appreciate my friend, the Governor of the great State of Wisconsin for being here. Tommy is a popular Governor, and the thing that makes him very unique is that he is a pretty darn good Harley-Davidson rider as well. I am proud to call him my friend. The people of this great state are honored to call him Governor.

I want to also thank my friend, Sonny Montgomery, for being here. Sonny and General Krulak are two of the many veterans that are standing by myself in this incredible quest to become this nation's leader. I have known Sonny for a long time. Obviously, you have as well. He calls himself a Democrat. We call ourselves friends. You and I call him patriot. Thank you for being here, Sonny.

Then, of course, General Krulak served this nation with distinction, one of the proud and the few and brave, a great friend of mine, and a great friend of Americans. General, I am so honored that you took time out of your schedule to be here and join us today.

I also want to thank the incoming Commander of this august organization. If all goes well, John, I look forward to working with you. If all doesn't go well, I still respect you.

To those of the greatest generation who are here, I happen to know something about the greatest generation, I was raised by a member of the greatest generation. Thank you for your service to the country, and for those who are being honored for their combat and service in the Korean theater.

In my state capital of Texas, we recently erected a monument to your service to this great nation of ours, to the cause of peace. For everybody else here, thank you for your service to this great land. Thank you for having me.

Recently, I was traveling with a friend and a supporter, a member of Post 7401 in the State of Arizona. That, of course, is Senator John McCain. I know you all join me and I know you join me in praying for his speedy and full recovery from his bout with cancer.

It is an honor to be a candidate for President of the United States. With it comes a special sense of responsibility. An election is the greatest exercise of freedom that you all have helped secure. Each candidate owes you a clear statement of his agenda for our country and for our nation's defense.

So I am honored to be here to state my agenda. This is a remarkable moment in our nation's history, but the question is to what end will we use this moment? My judgment is we must seize the moment and use these good times for great goals.

We must use these times to educate every single child by returning to high standards and discipline in our classrooms and local control of schools, and accountability in the public education systems all across

America. We must use these good times to keep our economy growing and to expand the opportunity by reducing the income tax burden on all Americans, especially those in the middle class and working their way into the middle class.

We must use these good times to honor this nation's commitment to the elderly by saving and strengthening Social Security and by reforming Medicare to include prescription drugs for those elderly in America. In order to do so, we must set a new tone in Washington, D.C.

We must end the era of finger pointing, name-calling and political bickering. We must bring a new era of civility to our nation's capital. There is another great goal, and an urgent goal. As President, should I become the President, I will rebuild the military power of the United States of America.

In this important goal, I will have a fantastic partner, a man who today I call my running mate, a man who is one of the greatest Secretaries of Defense this nation has ever known, a steady man, a man of judgment. And that man is Dick Cheney.

The facts are stark and the facts are real. The current administration inherited a military ready for the dangers and challenges facing our nation. The next President will inherit a military in decline. Our military is still without peer. It is still without equal in the world, but it is not without serious problems that must be addressed immediately.

I have great faith in those who serve our nation in the temper of their will and in the quality of their spirit. Our men and women in uniform love their country more than their comfort. They have never failed us and we must not fail them. But the best intentions and the highest morale are undermined by back-to-back deployments, poor pay, shortages of spare parts and equipment, and rapidly-declining readiness.

As a percentage of the gross national product, our investment in national security is at the lowest point it has been since Pearl Harbor. Overall in the armed services commitments around the world have tripled while our forces have been reduced by nearly 40 percent.

Earlier this month, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs said we are doing much more than we were doing ten years ago, and we are doing it with much less. At the start of this administration, 85 percent of all the combat units in the Air Force were fully ready for their mission. At the start of this year, only 65 percent of those units were ready.

We are reminded of readiness problems last May when the USS Decatur was forced to return to port a month earlier than planned for lack of funds. Think of it, a guided missile destroyer of the United States Navy turning back because there was not enough money for fuel.

In the Pacific fleet, training exercises have been cut back for the same reason. We have had to wait until the next fiscal year for training. In the Atlantic fleet, 21 warships need maintenance that has been delayed, or the maintenance has been cancelled.

In both the Navy and Air Force, there are shortages of one of our most

effective weapons, the cruise missile. The Navy is not only short on money, maintenance and weapons, it is short on sailors. The Navy entered this new century with a shortage of nearly 10,000 enlisted personnel at sea.

In 1998-'99 for the first time the United States Army fell short of its recruiting goals for the all-volunteer force. And the Air Force missed its recruiting goals for the first time since 1979. Over the last several years, the services have found it more and more difficult to retain the best people.

Our men and women in uniform and their families are the foundation of America's military readiness. Yet, in a survey last year of more than 1,000 officers and enlisted personnel, more than half said they were dissatisfied and intended to leave the service when their current term of enlistment was up.

I don't care what is said in a political campaign. These are signs of a military in decline and we must do something about it. The reasons are clear, lack of material and equipment, under-manning of units, over-deployment, not enough time for families, and soldiers who are on food stamps and soldiers who are poorly housed.

Dick Cheney and I have a simple message today for the men and women in uniform, their parents, their loved ones, their supporters, help is on the way. We are going to restore morale in the United States military and treat American soldiers and sailors and airmen and Marines with the respect that they have earned.

American soldiers must have confidence that if asked to serve and sacrifice, the cause will be worthy and our support for them total. First, we will give our armed forces better pay, better treatment and better training. Recently, after long neglect, a pay raise was finally passed. But I don't think it was enough.

In my first budget, I will ask the Congress to further the pay raise by a \$1 billion a year to make sure that our men and women in uniform are properly paid for their duty to America. Too much of our military housing is substandard. I will make renovations a priority and increase housing allowances to improve living conditions for our military families.

More than 700,000 children of servicemen and women are taught in schools owned and funded by the Department of Defense and the Department of Education. Yet after years of under-funding, many of these schools are run down and in need of repair. I will ask Congress for \$310 million needed to repair and construct schools that will educate the children of the men and women who wear our nation's uniforms.

These steps will go a long way toward improving morale in the armed forces and their families. But it is only a start. As Commander-in-Chief, I will give our military a clear sense of mission. America will be involved in the world, but that doesn't mean our military is the answer to every difficult foreign policy situation.

It does not mean our military is a substitute for clear strategy. A generation shaped by Vietnam must remember the lessons of Vietnam. When America uses force in the world, the cause must be just, the goal must be

clear, and the victory must be overwhelming.

I will order an immediate review of our overseas commitments in dozens of countries. I will keep our pledges to defend our friends against aggression. But I will replace uncertain missions with well-defined objectives. And I understand this, nothing could be better for morale than clarity and focus of the Commander-in-Chief.

Should I be fortunate enough to earn this high office, the mission of the military will be able to fight and win war and, therefore, prevent war from happening in the first place.

Third, we must be prepared for the challenges of the future using this window of opportunity to create the military of the future. We won't just spend more, we will spend it wisely. Our forces in the next century must be more agile, harder to find, easier to move, readily deployable, and lethal in action.

The cold war is over, but our defense policy is trapped in cold war thinking. I propose a new policy on nuclear weapons. Future threats will come not from a super power conflict but from rogue nations and terrorists. Even though the evil empire has passed, evil still remains.

People resent our successes, resent our freedoms, resent the great land called America. As a result, America needs a missile defense system, and I intend to deploy one at the earliest possible date. Now is the time not to defend outdated treaties, but to defend the American people.

At the same time we can minimize danger by removing as many nuclear weapons as possible from high alert and high trigger status. We should not keep weapons that our military planners say we do not need. America must seize the opportunity to build a safer world, both to defend against nuclear threats and to reduce nuclear tensions.

I will also end the confusion and chaos in handling top secret nuclear information and our nation's other most vital secrets. My administration will make our national labs secure again. Our vital information will be sealed again, and our nuclear secrets will be secret again.

Fourthly, to build morale in today's United States military, we must keep the faith with those who have worn the uniform in the past. We must keep faith with America's veterans. This means doing everything in our power to obtain the fullest possible accounting for those who have not returned, those still missing in action in America's Pacific wars. When we send Americans into danger, they will never, ever be abandoned.

And keeping faith also means giving our veterans first-rate health care and treating the veterans with dignity. As you know better than anyone, health care for veterans is a complicated bureaucratic process involving too many delays and uncertainties in coverage.

Disability compensation claims can be even a longer ordeal, taking an average of 165 days to complete. So chaotic is the process, there is now a backlog of nearly one-half million claims. This is no way to treat any citizen, must less a veteran of our armed forces.

The veterans health-care system and the claims process will be mod-

ernized so that claims are handled in a fair and friendly way. To raise the standard of service to the veterans, I am announcing today two proposals. As President, I will return the VA to the principle that it has a duty to assist veterans who seek service-related disability benefits.

The old policy required the VA to assess veterans with their claims, and that will be our policy again. In my administration, the Department of Veterans Affairs will act as an advocate for veterans seeking benefit claims, not acting as an adversary. Veterans who once stood in the line of fire to protect our freedom should not have to stand in the line of bureaucracy that is unwilling to help them in their claims.

Finally, as President, should I become your President, I will also bring together officials from the VA, leaders of the veterans groups, doctors in a new veterans Health Care Task Force. Their job will be to help ensure the swift and appropriate enforcement of laws such as the Veterans Millennium Health Care Act, and to further target and modernize areas that hinder veterans' access to the top-notch benefits they deserve.

President Kennedy observed a change is the law of life, and those who only look to the past or present are certain to miss the future. The choices we make now in the quiet days of peace will determine future battles, won or lost, young lives protected or squandered.

Our opportunity is here to redo America's purpose for a new generation, to extend America's peaceful influence across the world and across the years. This nation has been blessed by those who have been willing to serve a cause greater than self.

This nation has been blessed by men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice to our nation. This nation has been blessed by young men willing to travel long distances to fight for freedom. These lessons of our history must never be forgotten. The lesson of freedom must never be tarnished.

It is an honor to be standing before you. It is an honor to be running for President of the United States. It is an honor to be in the hall with heroes, both male and female alike. God bless you all and God bless America.

...Whereupon, the assembly extended a
prolonged standing ovation. ...

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you for your attention here this morning.

At this time we want to call on the National Chaplain to give us the Benediction.

BENEDICTION

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN VOGLER: Let us bow our heads. Once again, Father, we give you glory and praise. We thank you for being present with us during this opening ceremony of our 101st National Convention. May it always be in your honor.

Now, Father, we ask that you remain with us throughout this convention. Lead us so that all necessary tasks are completed. Lead us so that this convention is fulfilling and inspiring to us. In addition, Father, lead us to make this convention most enjoyable for each of us.

Let us have humor in our business sessions, good cheer at our banquet, gaiety at our Patriotic Rally, pleasure during our free time and fun at all times. Thank you, Father, and we pray in your holy name. Amen.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you all again, comrades, sisters and friends. We will see you at the banquet tonight. Thank you, Sergeants-at-Arms.

...Whereupon, the meeting was duly
recessed at 11:55 o'clock a.m. ...

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS BANQUET
AUGUST 21, 2000

(The Distinguished Guests Banquet of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, meeting in the Midwest Express Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was called to order at 7:00 o'clock p.m. by Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief John F. Gwizdak.)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Good evening, comrades, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the 101st VFW National Convention Banquet.

I am John Gwizdak, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the VFW and your Master of Ceremonies for the evening. I hope each of you has enjoyed your first day here in Milwaukee. We are pleased to have you with us this evening, especially the VFW National and Department leaders and our VFW Ladies Auxiliary members and leadership.

We are honored by your presence and the presence of our distinguished guests. I will introduce them to you following the dinner. Please stand at this time for our Invocation and remain standing for the Pledge of Allegiance.

INVOCATION

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN VOGLER: Let us bow our heads. Let us take a moment of silence prior for our own intentions.

Father, we are giving you glory and the praise. We thank you for our many blessings. We want to thank you for each of our special guests we have with us tonight. Always hold them in the palm of your hands.

We want to thank you for the all-American class of the year 1999-2000. Bless them all for their hard work in their Posts, in their communities, in the VFW, and for their country.

Father, we now ask your blessings upon this food which we are about to partake, so that it will nourish our bodies and minds so we may continue to do your will and to pursue the tasks of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States but even with more vigor. We ask this in your holy name. Amen.

...Whereupon, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak lead the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance. ...

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Please be seated and enjoy your dinner.

...Whereupon, the dinner was enjoyed at this time. ...

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Let's get settled down so we can go ahead and proceed with the program. We need to get it quieted down a little bit. We owe that courtesy to each other. I need a

wave of hands if you can hear us way in the back of the room back there.

Thanks again for your understanding and patience this evening. Again, only in the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Ladies Auxiliary can you find the courtesies that you expose to each other and do the things that are right. But I do need to ask you to do one thing.

There are some of us that are a little slower than others. Be patient and let's not try to pass folks on the stairwells, and so forth, because we darn sure don't need anybody hurt because we want to see you back here next year.

It is my pleasure to introduce our head table guests. I shall begin at the lower tier. Please stand when introduced and remain standing. Audience, please hold your applause until I have completed the lower tier. We are especially honored to welcome the Executive Director of the American Battle Monuments Commission, Colonel Ken Pond, United States Army, Retired.

Our next guest, who will receive the VFW Armed Forces Award later this week, I am pleased to present the Medal of Honor recipient Alfred Rascon. It is a distinct honor to have with us tonight our good friends from the Veterans Affairs Commission, Taipei, Taiwan.

I am pleased to welcome the Overseas Liaison Section Chief, Jonathan Chou. It is certainly an honor to present the Vice-Chairman of the Taiwan Veterans Affairs Commission. Please welcome Lieutenant General Kao.

Next is the Inspector General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, John Zuba, from Vermont. The National Chief of Staff of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Arthur E. Koch, III, and his wife, Brenda, from New York.

The Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Designate of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Raymond Sisk and his wife, Joan, from California. We are certainly pleased to have our next guest with us this evening. She is President of the Women in Military Service for American Memorial Foundation, Incorporated, Brigadier General Wilma M. Vaught, United States Air Force, Retired.

Next is the Director of the Selective Service System, Gil Coronado. The National Surgeon General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Dr. Curtis H. Bohlman, and his wife, Juanita, from Oklahoma. The Judge Advocate General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Donald W. Watts, and his wife, Janice, from Missouri. Let's give them a round of applause. You may be seated.

I shall now introduce our guests at the upper tier, and to my far left, the National Secretary-Treasurer of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Celia Davis, and her husband, Kenneth, of Missouri.

Next is the Chairman of the 101 VFW National Convention and Past VFW Commander-in-Chief, Walter G. Hogan from Wisconsin. Boy, I am glad my orders are being followed tonight. (Laughter) Maybe that will change Friday.

Next is the National Junior Vice-President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Diana Stout from West Virginia. Next is the

National Senior Vice-President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Pat Jankowski, and her husband, John, from Michigan.

I will skip the next guest for the time being. The Adjutant General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, John J. Senk, Jr., of New Jersey. I am pleased and proud to present my wife, Betty Gwizdak, from the Peach State of Georgia. Let's give them a round of applause. (Applause)

I shall now introduce our guests at the upper tier and to my far right. First is the National Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Reverend Fred Vogler, and his guest, Jean Weaver from California. Next is the Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Joe Ridgley, and his wife, Judy, from Missouri.

Our next guest will receive the Hall of Fame Award tomorrow morning, Richard Crenna. I am especially pleased to introduce the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Lorraine Frier, from North Dakota.

Next is the VFW National Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, James N. Goldsmith, and his wife, Jan, from Michigan.

It is my distinct pleasure to introduce the wife of our Commander-in-Chief, the lovely and gracious Mary Smart from New Hampshire. I shall skip the next two individuals for the time being. Now, let's give them all a warm welcome. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: It is now my sincere honor to introduce a personal friend and the Commander-in-Chief of our great organization, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Over the years, in uniform and as a civilian, I am proud to have served with many dedicated people. I have found few that equal this gentleman's uncompromising commitment and loyalty to his country, fellow man and America's veterans.

Throughout the past year, he has shown himself to be an aggressive and articulate spokesman for our organization and for all those who serve and have served.

He gained his VFW eligibility while serving as a member of the 176th Assault Helicopter Company of the Americal Division at Chu Lai, South Vietnam, in 1972 and 1973. In recognition of that service, he received a Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, a Vietnam Service Medal with four stars, and a Presidential Unit Citation.

Joining VFW Post 2181 in Exeter, New Hampshire, while in Vietnam, he returned to move quickly through the ranks of VFW leadership to become an All American Department Commander in 1981-82. From that point forward, he served in a variety of VFW leadership roles including chairmanships of a number of national committees, and was appointed National Chief of Staff in 1995. In August of 1997, he became the first member from the State of New Hampshire to hold the office of Junior Vice

Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

He served as Adjutant/Quartermaster of the Department of New Hampshire from 1985 until assuming his duties as Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief in 1997. He continues to serve his Department as Quartermaster. Currently a Life Member of VFW Post 483 in Nashua, New Hampshire, he has been Chairman of the Board of Managers of the New Hampshire Veterans Home since 1987. He is a retired firefighter with 21 years of service, and a former State Representative from Congressional District 28, Nashua, New Hampshire.

It is obvious from his record of exemplary service that this is a man who has dedicated his life to improve the lives of others. Please welcome a man I personally respect and admire, the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, John W. Smart from the Granite State of New Hampshire.

REMARKS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you all very much. I have toned it down a little. Thank you for being here this evening to honor our distinguished guests at the lower dais and the upper dais.

To you, Madam Secretary, thank you so much for finding time in your busy schedule to be here this evening. You know, as I look over this audience and I look at friends, old friends, new friends, you have bestowed upon me probably the highest honor that any veteran in this country can achieve, and that is to be your Commander-in-Chief. I say thank you from the bottom of my heart for giving me that opportunity.

We have had great leaders in this organization. Many of them our are Past Commanders-in-Chief. I am so proud of each and every one of them. I just want to take a moment to reflect back, if I can, to what has happened to me during the past three years.

Some of you have heard these stories before. But they are memories that I will cherish for the rest of my life. I can remember back when I was a Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief and I had the opportunity to go back to Vietnam, and as I went through Bangkok, and I was briefed there by the Joint Task Force for Full Accounting, and I got on that plane and was headed towards Hanoi, it was my first experience to land in a Communist country.

Believe it or not, we had no mission to cross that DMZ. At least that is what we were told. I remember landing there and being met by Ambassador Pete Peterson there, and the next day we had our boots on and we had our jungle shirts on and I was taken out to the excavation sites.

I don't know how I could ever share the feeling with you, to talk to you about those brave young men and women who volunteer for sometimes up to 60 days to go out to the excavation sites to dig up remains of those who were missing in action.

Just think for a moment as they were digging in those areas, they found a bone fragment, and you could see the glow in their eyes, because that

meant to them that it was closure for a loved one back home. Think for a moment of holding that bone fragment in the palm of your hand, knowing that was one of our heroes, one of our finest who paid the supreme sacrifice, that was going now to go back through the channels to give them the proper burial place back in their home.

I shall never forget that. And to have the opportunity to travel around the world, to visit with some of the finest, greatest, most dedicated men and women in the military today. I said time and time again we should be very, very proud of each and every one of them. But there are the difficulties they face.

It is not the same military that many of us faced as young 20, 25-year-olds. Today, over 72 percent of them are married with families. Yes, there are issues that need to be addressed. I hope I did my best in carrying your message across this country and to those who represent us in the halls of Congress.

They are not asking for a lot, my fellow comrades. All they are asking for is to give them the best health care, to address the quality of life issues, to give them the equipment they need so they can perform their mission in a timely fashion. So, yes, they can come home to their loved ones and have the opportunity to serve in the communities once again they came from. I don't believe that it is too much to ask for.

When we talk about our veterans, as I traveled across your country and visited the communities in which you lived, we took the opportunity to go visit with those VA Directors and Regional Directors that take care of claim forms and take care of America's finest.

We hear of the difficult times they have in meeting their budget to care for these veterans. Yes, some 3.1 million veterans over the course of the last three years have been enrolled in the system that was put in place to take care of them.

Is it too much to ask that we fully fund a health-care system to care for a little over ten percent of the American heroes? Is it too much? Is it too much to ask those who process the claims in our regional offices why it should take up to 165 days to 200 days to process that claim when a veteran who goes and seeks help for compensation for disabilities, illnesses that needs help today, why should they have to wait?

Why should they have to wait, and why, why can't we care for those dedicated men and women who served during World War II, those freedoms that we enjoy in our country today and those that built the country as we know it, are now at the average age of 79 years old. Why are they being turned away when they need beds, they need care and long-term health-care facilities? Is it too much to ask for?

My fellow comrades, sisters and friends, we delivered that message loud and clear this year. We don't care who accepts the responsibility as long as we get the funding needed to care for these veterans. That is what it is all about, because we were founded by some great American heroes who fought during the Filipino War, the Spanish American War, who came

home to their country and faced the same problems and difficulties that we face today.

You need to get involved. You need to get involved in the political process, whether you be a Democrat, Republican or Independent. I have said that time and time again, because we have to rely on each and every one of you in this audience to make sure that those that seek political office at the highest level, those who want to serve in the halls of Congress, understands the plight of the American veterans. That is all we ask; that is all we ask.

Under the leadership of John Gwizdak, I am confident that you will continue to get things right for American veterans and ensuring those that need health care get the funding they need, and those who serve in the military today have the very best equipment they need so they can perform their mission.

As your Commander-in-Chief, you have made me so very proud to represent each and every one of you, because you have given me the opportunity to brag about you, because I can tell throughout across this country how many organizations do we know that could contribute over \$65 million in community service work each and every year? That's the VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary.

How many organizations have an organization to give out over \$139,000 in scholarships in our Voice of Democracy program? When we add our Posts, our Districts and our Departments, you give back to the communities in which you live some \$2.1 million. You should be proud.

I tell you, God bless the Ladies Auxiliary and the help they give us. I believe this is the twelfth consecutive year they have raised over \$3 million for that dreaded disease of cancer aid and research. That is quite remarkable. I thank you.

The Operation Uplink calling card, over 750,000 calling cards have been distributed to our men and women in military and to those in the VA hospitals. I said at the presentations this afternoon, think for a moment what you do with this program.

Think for a moment how it would feel to be in Bosnia distributing these cards out to our young men and women. Think of that corporal that came up to me about a half hour after I presented that card to him and said, "Mr. Smart, deliver a message for me, please. Go back to the VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary and say thank you for this program."

That young soldier had just wished his daughter happy birthday. That's the VFW I represent, that's the Ladies Auxiliary that we have in the partnership over 85 years, that is each and every one of you in this audience. So I say once again thank you for what you do for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

I will always say, ladies, thank you for what you do for the Ladies Auxiliary. But I want to thank each and every one of you for what you truly do for American heroes, our fellow comrades in arms, our fellow veterans, America's true heroes, America's veterans. Thank you so very much.

...Whereupon, the assembly extended a
prolonged standing ovation. ...

INTRODUCTION OF LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT LORRAINE FRIER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: It is now my distinct pleasure to introduce the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Lorraine Frier was elected National President of the 713,038 members of the Ladies Auxiliary at its 86th National Convention in Kansas City on August 20, 1999. I remember that date, too. Her election makes her the first person from North Dakota to hold this prestigious office.

Throughout the past year, Lorraine's theme "Free to Fly" has challenged her organization to new levels of accomplishment. She has demonstrated exceptional strength and commitment as she has led the Ladies Auxiliary to new heights of patriotism and service.

Please give a warm welcome to the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Lorraine Frier, from Fargo, North Dakota.

REMARKS BY NATIONAL PRESIDENT OF THE LADIES AUXILIARY

NATIONAL PRESIDENT FRIER: Thank you, John, Commander Smart, my "Mr. Wonderful." To you, Madeleine Albright, it is nice to have you with us tonight. Heather, it has been a privilege to have you with us all day. Thank you once again for everything that you do for my veterans, too.

It has been a pleasure to be sitting next to Richard Crenna all night. To General Kao and Jonathan, thank you once again for coming to join us. To all the important VIPs on the dais, but most important of all my important heroes, you. All of you are my heroes.

My beautiful ladies that work so hard, our wonderful comrades that work so hard with our ladies, as today they were honored at the Community Service Breakfast. I will repeat it always and always and always. When you have a Post and an Auxiliary working together, you have nothing but partnership and success, because that is what it takes to do it together, the Ladies Auxiliary and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

I have had a wonderful year. I have had a wonderful privilege that my ladies have bestowed upon me this year. I have visited the East Coast, to the West Coast, and I have been from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. And I have been in Alaska and Hawaii, and my wonderful trip to the Far East. I have been to the deep South and to the West, and to the old West, too. But I have to be honest and tell you all I think North Dakota is the best.

I have had the privilege of meeting lots of VIP people; breakfast with President Clinton, a kiss today from George W. — two actually. It has been

a wonderful ride and we have had a few bumps sometimes and little curves we take along our way, but it has been a privilege and an honor to serve all of my ladies. And we have had so many firsts this year with "Mr. Wonderful" and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

We had our first Community Service Conference in Washington, D.C., where my ladies were able to participate with the comrades and their commanders and honor our youth winners of our Voice of Democracy and our youth volunteer winners. That was the highlight of my whole year.

I thank you, each and every one of you, for participating in that. I know it will only get better. Tonight is another first, that I am here before you, and I thank you for that "Mr. Wonderful." I sometimes feel us ladies have come a long way and I thank you.

God bless each and every one of you and may God always hold my veterans and my ladies in the palm of his hand. I thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF MISS AMERICA 2000 - HEATHER FRENCH

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, Madam President.

For those of you who attended this morning's Joint Opening Session, I have no doubt that you were impressed with this next young lady. She has done more to raise awareness of the plight of homeless veterans and bring honor to all veterans than any Miss America before her.

I want to again express my gratitude to her for her aggressive and articulate efforts to increase awareness, volunteerism and funding for these forgotten members of the veteran's community.

Heather will now entertain us with a stirring rendition of God Bless America.

REMARKS BY MISS AMERICA 2000 - HEATHER FRENCH

MISS AMERICA HEATHER FRENCH: America the Beautiful. That is all right. No, it says God Bless America. I tend to get your National Commander a little tongue-tied as did Mrs. Cohen did today during the reception. We will forgive you for that.

Before I begin, I spoke to most of you this morning and some of you this afternoon. Again, I would like to express my thanks to the veterans in the audience, and especially Madam President Lorraine. As a Lifetime Member of the Ladies Auxiliary of the VFW, it has been a pleasure to be under your leadership and guidance this year and to see how the ladies have come so far. As most of the men in this audience know, without the Ladies Auxiliary, where would you be?

Secretary Albright, it is a pleasure to be in your presence. Your presence here does more than just lend your support. It helps to show these veterans and their families that they will once again get up to the spotlight of being the number one priority in this country where they should be, and that is where we will move in the future.

To the veterans and the families in the audience, my father served his best, and I want to leave you with this song tonight, "America the Beautiful."

...Whereupon, Miss French sang "America the Beautiful." ...

God bless you and I love you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: I think there is a typo. I think we ought to get the individual that typed this to come up here and sing God Bless America. John Senk, will you please come forward. (Laughter) Oh, this has been a good day, I tell you.

PRESENTATION OF THE EISENHOWER AWARD, GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: The Dwight David Eisenhower Distinguished Service Award is one of the VFW's most prestigious awards. It is awarded to an individual for contributions to the cause of American security, unity and world peace.

It is given to recognize exemplary and/or extraordinary contributions and achievements in securing the nation from foreign threats, in advancing the interests of the nation abroad, in inspiring the unity of the American republic behind these efforts, and by doing so, advancing the goal of world peace.

The presentation of this award began in 1970. Notable among those who have received this award are Bob Hope, James Baker, III, Henry Kissinger and President Richard M. Nixon.

Tonight, we add another notable name to the list of distinguished recipients.

Madeleine Korbelt Albright was nominated by President Clinton on December 5, 1996, as Secretary of State. With unanimous Senate confirmation on January 23, 1997, she became the first female Secretary of State and the highest ranking woman in the history of the United States Government.

Prior to her appointment, Secretary Albright served as the United States permanent representative to the United Nations and as a member of the National Security Council on President Clinton's Cabinet.

Secretary Albright holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Wellesley College with honors in political science, has studied at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, received a certificate from the Russian Institute at Columbia University, and holds a Master's and Doctorate from Columbia University's Department of Public Law and Government.

She has shown herself to be an effective and strong representative of our nation on many sensitive international fronts. She has been a major force in the Mideast peace negotiations and outspoken in her condemnation of terrorism. She has articulated America's positions in Russia,

Chechnya, China and Africa.

Secretary Albright is an outspoken proponent of democracy who encourages struggling democracies, such as Columbia, Nigeria, Indonesia and the Ukraine to persevere in the face of opposition.

"Democracy may be conceived by dreamers," she said in a speech at Johns Hopkins University on January 18, 2000, "but it is made real by doers. And our responsibility, as the world's leading democracy, is to work in partnership with others to help nationals in transition move to a higher stage of democratic development."

It is my pleasure to present the VFW Dwight David Eisenhower Distinguished Service Award to a great American, the Honorable Madeleine Korbelt Albright.

If I might say so, "The Dwight David Eisenhower Distinguished Service Medal is presented to Madeleine Albright in special recognition of her many contributions to the cause of American security, unity and world peace as the first female Secretary of State and the highest ranking woman in the history of United States Government. Her expertise in foreign policy has brought about an era of international accord moving all nations toward the ultimate dream of global peace.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 21st day of August, 2000. Approved by the National Council of Administration." This has been signed by the Commander-in-Chief, John W. Smart, and the Adjutant General, John J. Senk, Jr. Congratulations, Madam Secretary. (Applause)

REMARKS BY SECRETARY OF STATE MADELEINE ALBRIGHT

SECRETARY OF STATE ALBRIGHT: Thank you very much, Mr. Commander-in-Chief, for that introduction and for the opportunity to be here with you tonight.

Officers and members of the VFW and Auxiliary, Chaplain Vogler, Miss America Heather French, honored guests and friends, good evening. I am very pleased to participate in the VFW's 101st Convention and I want to thank you ever so much for the Dwight David Eisenhower Award. I will have it with great pride.

In my earlier life, I served on organizational boards and often presented prizes to other people. So I hope the Chaplain will forgive me when I say that although it is assuredly more blessed to give, there are times when receiving is a lot more fun. And for me, that is especially true when the award comes with a \$15,000 honorarium, which I am pleased to donate to the Armed Forces Retirement Home Foundation; and when the award is named for one of America's greatest leaders and presented on behalf of those who risked their lives in our nation's wars.

As you may know, I spent some time when I was very young in a bomb shelter in London, trying to keep safe from Hitler's bombs. The Nazis had

conquered my native Czechoslovakia and were attacking the land in which my family had sought refuge. Our world was in flames and we were uncertain what the future would hold. It's no wonder that we kept our ears glued to the radio. And through the darkness, we were sustained by the inspiring words of leaders such as Churchill and Eisenhower, and by the heroism of allied troops.

I was just a little girl, but in my heart, even then, I came to admire those brave enough to fight for freedom, and I fell in love with Americans in uniform. If not for you, and many like you, I wouldn't be here tonight. And liberty's torch, which now burns in the world so brightly, would long ago have flickered and gone out. So I salute you, and would do so with 21 guns if the State Department had any, for the magnificent contributions you have made.

I also congratulate you for the valuable services you continue to provide to our young people, veterans and communities, and for the lift you give to our nation's spirit by reminding us daily of what it means to be an American. As Secretary of State and a very proud citizen, I wish you many more decades of success.

This wonderful convention is an occasion for bringing veterans together. But it is more than that. It is also a time to remember those who are not here; the brave men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice for us. And I hope that, in this, the fiftieth year since the outbreak of fighting in Korea, we will vow that in honoring American veterans there must never again be a "forgotten war."

In this, the 25th year since America's departure from Vietnam, we must vow never again to enter a conflict without the means and the will to win. And in this, the first year of the 21st Century, we must vow to find further answers about our countrymen still unaccounted for from the 20th Century wars. Whether those answers are in Pyongyang or Hanoi, Russia or Laos, we must continue this quest as a matter of duty, a question of honor, and a mission of the highest national priority.

Mr. Commander-in-Chief, I must say that when I was last in Vietnam I brought back the remains of four Americans, and they were presented to me in boxes this size (indicating), and there was a bone and there was a toothbrush and there were dog tags, and that was the American I brought home.

This evening, here in Milwaukee, we look out upon a world in which our nation is respected and at peace. Our alliances are vigorous, our economy is prosperous. And from the distant corners of Asia to our own hemisphere, the democratic values we cherish are more widely observed than ever before. For the first time in history, more than half the world's people live under elected governments.

All of this is no accident, and its continuation is by no means inevitable. Democratic progress must be sustained as it was built by American leadership. And our leadership must be sustained if our citizens are to be secure, our interests protected and our values advanced. We know that in this new era of unprecedented opportunity and promise, we

also face new dangers, such as the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological arms; the spread of crime, pollution and disease; and the consummation of a devil's marriage between technology and terror.

For America to lead in such a dynamic environment requires a willingness to think anew about traditional concepts of national security. We must recognize that threats to America may come not only from nations, but also from extremist groups plotting to attack us by unconventional means.

And we must understand that the strategic map has changed, because distance today means so little. If unopposed, serious dangers can incubate and come to affect our citizens and shores from even the most remote corners of the globe.

After World War II, some Americans felt we could rely solely on the atomic bomb for our security. But we quickly learned that strong conventional forces had to be maintained; NATO had to be forged; and nations threatened by our enemies had to be helped. We learned, as well, that assistance in rebuilding a war-torn world, promoting democracy, and spurring development must be part of any comprehensive national security strategy.

Much has changed since that time. But the need for a comprehensive approach to the protection of our interests and values has not. Our armed forces must remain what they are, the best led, best trained, best equipped, and most respected in the world.

And as my colleague, the Secretary of Defense Cohen has made clear: America's potential adversaries must understand that whichever party wins the election, whichever party controls Congress, our country will stay united behind our military; and our armed forces will remain the world's most powerful force for freedom. But as any military leader will tell you, strong armed forces are not enough. We also need first-rate diplomacy for there are many occasions, in many places, where we rely on diplomacy first to protect our interests, and prevent situations from arising that put our armed forces in harm's way.

President Eisenhower had a good name for combining strong diplomacy with the possible use of force. He called it "waging peace." And that is what America has done under Republican and Democratic administrations alike since this complex new era dawned a decade ago.

Under President Bush, America began nuclear reductions with Russia, pushed Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait, revived the Middle East Peace Process, initiated a humanitarian intervention in Somalia, and formally warned Milosevic not to use force to repress the people of Kosovo.

Under President Clinton and Vice-President Gore, America has moved forward with a global strategy to further reduce the nuclear danger, adapt our alliances, move far closer to Arab-Israeli peace, contain the Iraqi military, promote democratic transitions, and respond to terror and other 21st Century threats.

For example, when President Clinton took office, the possibility that control would be lost over nuclear weapons in the former Soviet Union was

both urgent and real. With bipartisan support, the Administration gained the removal of nuclear arms from three former Soviet Republics; helped deactivate thousands of nuclear warheads; and purchased more than 60 tons of highly-enriched uranium that could have fallen into the hands of terrorists.

In 1993, skeptics were saying that our Cold War-era alliances in Europe and Asia would no longer be relevant and might not survive. But these pacts are cornerstones of global security. So the Administration led in expanding and reinvigorating NATO and modernizing our alliance with Japan. Eight years ago, a dangerous nuclear weapons program was underway in North Korea and the possibility of conflict was on the rise. Today, the prospects for stability are on the rise.

In keeping with a policy review conducted by former Defense Secretary Perry, the Administration is engaged in direct talks with Pyongyang to see that international concerns about missile and nuclear-related activities are met. And we have been firm in backing our diplomacy with the deterrence our armed forces provide.

When President Clinton took office, war was raging in the Balkans, where a UN peace operation was failing, and atrocities were being committed on a daily basis. Many argued that America should look the other way and hope the fighting would simply burn itself out.

But history warns us that in this region there is no natural firebreak to conflict. So when diplomatic options were exhausted, the Clinton-Gore Administration called for NATO airstrikes to end the war in Bosnia. And when Milosevic launched a campaign of terror in Kosovo, our Alliance stopped him. This was not simply a humanitarian intervention.

President Clinton made good on President Bush's pledge to the people of Kosovo, and thereby reminded the world that America meets its obligations. NATO proved it could act with unity and resolve to defend European stability. And together, we reinforce the principle that massive violations of human rights by their very nature cannot be ignored; they must be opposed.

Of course, NATO's actions in Kosovo were not without risk. If one had subjected them to a rigid checklist designed to prevent us from ever using force except under ideal conditions, the allied campaign would probably never have been launched. But President Clinton had to respond to a real world situation, not a textbook case. He had to weigh the risks of acting against the costs of doing nothing. He made the right choice, and America did the right thing in Kosovo.

Mindful of the well-being of our troops, no allied lives were lost in the fighting. The Alliance held; ethnic cleansing was reversed; atrocities halted; refugees returned; and recovery begun. Moreover, we forged a Pact with regional leaders to transform all of southeast Europe from an area of chronic instability into a full partner in the new Europe. That is good for America's future. And it is what waging peace is all about.

We also stand up for stability and law when we oppose the forces of international terror. Well-financed terrorist leaders have vowed to kill

Americans worldwide. The reason is that our nation is the world's strongest supporter of democracy and human rights.

As the tragic bombing of two U.S. embassies in Africa in 1998 showed, the terrorists' goal is to scare us into abandoning our allies, friends and responsibilities. Fat chance. America's finest planted the flag at Iwo Jima and plunged into Hell at Omaha Beach. We will not be intimidated. But to defeat terror, here again, we need the full range of foreign policy tools.

Our diplomats work hard to persuade other governments to deny terrorists any place to run or hide. Our experts have trained personnel from more than 90 countries in counter-terrorism techniques. Our law enforcement teams strive to identify and nab terrorists before they can commit their cowardly crimes. And our armed forces are prepared, when necessary, to help prevent and punish terrorist attacks.

Those who practice terror should have no illusions. Old Glory will continue to fly wherever we have interests to defend. We will meet our commitments. We will strive to protect our people. And we will fight terror on every front, with every tool, every day. Of course, there are many other dimensions to American leadership on behalf of security and law. For example, the President played a personal role in helping the people of Northern Ireland end generations of violence.

We are working with regional leaders and the United Nations to resolve conflicts in Africa. We have sacrificed many a night's sleep helping Israelis and Palestinians inch their way towards the vital goal of a comprehensive peace. And we have taken steps to protect Americans from the emerging threat posed by long-range ballistic missiles. To this end, we are developing national and theater missile defense technologies with deployment decisions to be based on the best interest of the United States and of the men and women in uniform we have stationed overseas.

And we work with our allies and others every day in order to stem the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the missiles that can deliver them. Most of the efforts I have discussed this evening remain works in progress. Protecting America's national security is a 24-hour, seven-day a week mission that has no completion date.

Like President Clinton, the next President, whether a Republican or a Democrat, will need the support of our citizens to keep America strong, respected and safe. And that support must be backed by resources, both for our military and for our diplomats. The VFW is on record in favor of a strong budget for national defense and for our intelligence agencies. I applaud that. But as I have stressed throughout these remarks, America needs a full arsenal if our national security is to be protected. And diplomacy often is our first line of defense.

For example, by implementing the framework agreement, we negotiated to free North Korea's nuclear weapons program, we reduce the risk of conflict on a peninsula where 37,000 of our fighting men and women are deployed. By paying our share of the costs of building peace in Bosnia and Kosovo, we bring closer the day our troops in the Balkans can come home.

By supporting UN peacekeeping operations, we serve the interests and values we cherish at a cost and risk far less than if we had to do it all ourselves. By working with others to counter terror, halt drugs, defeat crime and combat AIDS, we help make Americans everywhere more secure.

Many people assume that most of these international operations are paid for out of our defense budget, but they are not. Others believe that such programs consume ten or twenty percent of our federal budget. The truth is that these initiatives are a bargain. We allocate only about one penny out of every federal dollar for everything, from nonproliferation to providing security at our overseas posts. That is one percent. Unfortunately, Congress is trying to slash even this meager budget across the board. This would hurt America, and make it much harder for the next President to exercise influence on our behalf around the world.

This is not a partisan issue. It is a patriotic issue. I urge Congress and I urge the VFW to support our international operations and programs. And I ask your help in seeing that our diplomats receive the resources they need to do their jobs. For they, like our men and women in uniform, serve America and often go in harm's way.

I know, because I have seen their dedication to our country. I have seen them laboring under difficult and dangerous conditions. I have seen them risk their lives to aid others and advance the cause of peace. And I had the sad honor, two summers ago, of accompanying some of these heroes back from an embassy in Africa on the final leg of their final journey home. America needs a strong defense and a strong foreign policy. Both are essential to our national security. Both must be backed by resources. And both should enjoy the full support of Congress and the American people. (Applause)

Back in Washington, when I am tired, all I need to do to revive myself is to look out the window. From my office, I am able to see the National Capitol Mall, including the memorials to Lincoln and Jefferson, the Washington Monument, the white stone markers of Arlington, the Korean Memorial, and the silent etched, eloquent black of the Vietnam Wall. And I pray that the next Secretary of State will be able to add to that list a memorial, at long last, to the greatest generation, the veterans of World War II. (Applause)

It is said that time conquers everything. But the principles of liberty and the legacy of sacrifice celebrated by these examples of remembrance have neither withered nor worn. From Valley Forge to the skies over Kosovo, waging war or waging peace, America has led because America has a purpose. And that purpose is freedom.

I began my remarks tonight with a story of my own personal debt to this country. That story has been repeated in millions of variations over two centuries in the lives not only of immigrants, but of those overseas who have been liberated or sheltered by American soldiers, empowered by American assistance or inspired by American ideals.

For our nation, there are no final frontiers. We are doers. Whatever

dangers the future may hold, we will meet them. With the memory alive in our hearts of past sacrifice, we will defend our freedom. Together, we will honor our flag, meet our responsibilities and live up to our principles.

To these missions, I pledge my own best efforts this evening, not only for as long as I am Secretary of State but for as long as I live. And I know that I can count on the support of each of you, the heroes of our past; the guardians of our present; the builders of our future; the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Thank you all very much and may God bless the United States.

...Whereupon, the assembly extended a
prolonged rising ovation. ...

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Please remain standing for the Benediction.

BENEDICTION

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN VOGLER: Let us bow our heads and let us pray. Father, once again we give you glory and praise. We thank you for the most wonderful dinner that we all enjoyed. We ask your blessings upon the servers and the preparers.

Father, forever bless Miss America, Heather French, for she is America the Beautiful. Father, we pray God's speed to Secretary Albright, for she has given more than she has received. Bless her daily so that she may always do your will. Then, Father, keep us all safe as we journey tonight to our resting place. And, Father, we ask this in your Holy name. Amen. May God bless America and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you, Madeleine Albright, for your kind words. The audience is dismissed. Be careful as you go out there this evening, we want to see you back in the morning. Thank you all for being so courteous.

...Whereupon, the banquet was adjourned
at 9:20 o'clock p.m. ...

FIRST BUSINESS SESSION TUESDAY MORNING, AUGUST 22, 2000

(The First Business Session of the 101st National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, was called to order in the Midwest Express Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, at 8:00 o'clock a.m., by Commander-in-Chief Smart.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Sergeant-at-Arms, will you please prepare the room for the Opening Ceremonies.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Yes, sir, Chief.

(Whereupon, National Sergeant-at-Arms Barry Hoffman led the Convention in the Salute to the Colors, and National Chaplain Fred Vogler gave the Opening Prayer, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Opening Ceremonies have been performed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Good morning, comrades. At this time I would like to call upon the Adjutant General for a few announcements.

MEMBERSHIP DRAWING

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: As part of the 1999-2000 Membership Program, a 2000 Buick Century automobile, a \$5,000 travel voucher and a \$2,500 travel voucher from the Veterans Travel Service were offered as recruiting incentives for those individuals recruiting new and reinstated members.

As part of this program, each recruiter was offered a chance to win each of these awards. In addition, the new or reinstated member was also given a chance to win one of these prizes. This automobile has been on display here at the Midwest Express Center in the exhibit area since Saturday. I am pleased to report that we will now hold the drawing. We will draw for the winner of the 2000 Buick Century first.

Commander-in-Chief, are you ready? The winner is Dale W. McCoy, Chanute, Kansas, Post No. 1654. Are you present?

Chief, the drawing for the \$5,000 travel voucher, please. Harold Shepard, Star City, Arizona, Post 2746, is the winner. That is a \$5,000 travel voucher from VTS.

Next is William J. Carter, Belleville, Illinois, Post 805, a \$2,500 travel voucher.

PRESENTATION OF MEMBERSHIP CITATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ARIZONA

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Comrades, for thirty-three years the members of the Department of Arizona have worked together as a team to increase VFW membership throughout the state. Each member of the Department of Arizona can take pride in their many years of dedication and hard work that went into reaching this significant milestone.

Now in recognition of those efforts, I would like to call on John Halstad, the Immediate Past Commander of Arizona, to accept from the Commander-in-chief "Consecutive Years of Membership Growth" citation.

Congratulations to the Department of Arizona.

The citation reads: "Certificate of Commendation" presented to the Department of Arizona in recognition of thirty-three consecutive years of membership growth evidencing the attainment of three decades of continuous membership gain by a Department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 22nd day of August, 2000."

This has been signed by Commander-in-Chief John W. Smart and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General. Congratulations, Arizona.

COMRADE JOHN HALSTAD (Department of Arizona): I would like to accept this on behalf of all of the membership from Arizona, and I would like to acknowledge that we had a very hard working Membership Chairman last year. He worked very hard. His name is Larry Reinhart. I would like to give him a hand because he helped to make it all possible. Thank you.

PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATION OF APPRECIATION TO THE 100TH NATIONAL CONVENTION COMMITTEE

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Commander-in-Chief Smart will now present a Certificate of Appreciation to the 100th National Convention Committee for their work in planning and conducting last year's Centennial National Convention in Kansas City. Any convention requires a lot of planning and hard work on the part of the Committee and its Chairman. But the 100th Anniversary Convention really demands a lot of those in charge of executing it.

A convention that marked a culmination of a century of service could not be taken lightly. The entire century and all the hard work that was accomplished over that century had to be recognized. The members had to leave that convention ready to tackle their next century.

Jim Mueller and his Committee accomplished that difficult task in an outstanding manner, and it is with great pride that we present him and his Committee this Certificate of Appreciation.

Jim Mueller, Chairman of the VFW Centennial Convention.

The citation being presented reads, "Certificate of Appreciation presented to the 100th National Convention Committee in sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of their dedication and tireless efforts to ensure the success of the 100th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States held in Kansas City, Missouri, August 14-19, 1999.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 22nd day of August, 2000."

This has been signed by John W. Smart, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

COMRADE JAMES MUELLER (Department of Missouri): I would just

like to take this opportunity to thank all of my Committee. This was a bi-state Committee from the Department of Missouri and the Department of Kansas. I appreciate all the hard work they did.

There were two complaints. These guys put a lot of time and effort in it. I know when we got in the room sometime they would talk about what had happened for the day and what was going to take place. It has been an enjoyable time and I hope everyone enjoyed the convention. Thank you very much.

REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, Jim. At this time I am going to go into the Report of the Credentials Committee. The Chairman is Richard Trombla.

COMRADE RICHARD TROMBLA (Post 1174 - Kansas): Commander-in-Chief and comrades, this is a temporary report as of the close of last night, at 4:00 o'clock.

Total delegates, 12,113; Department Commanders, 42; Past Commanders-in-Chief, 27; National Officers, 36. That gives us a grand total of 12,218.

I would like to remind the Department Commanders there are 12 Department Commanders that have not registered with us. There are two Council members that have not registered. Please go to the credentials desk so you can be registered.

I would like to also announce that the Department Commanders can pick up their daily tally sheets from the Sergeants-at-Arms in my left corner. You can pick those up now. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, Richard, and your Committee for the job they are doing here today.

At this time I am going to have the Report of the Committee on Convention Rules. I will call to the podium Past Commander-in-Chief Clifford G. Olson, Jr.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON CONVENTION RULES

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OLSON: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. Good morning, comrades. I just want to make sure that some of you are paying attention. I will try it again. Good morning, comrades. There you go. That's better.

First, I would like to thank the Commander-in-Chief for this appointment. It has been interesting, and I also would like to introduce to you my Co-Chairman, Past Commander-in-Chief Jim Kimmerly from the great Department of New Mexico.

Comrades, I will read off the report of the Committee and state the Convention Rules we hope that we will be able to follow in this convention.

To the 101st National Convention, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, your Committee on Convention Rules met Sunday afternoon, August 20, and agreed on the following recommendations which are respectfully submitted for your consideration:

1. That, with exceptions noted below, Demeter's Manual be recognized as parliamentary authority for this Convention.
2. That when a registered delegate desires to make a motion or address the Convention, he shall rise, address the Chair as "Comrade Commander-in-Chief," and after being recognized, shall state his name, his Post number and Department, before proceeding.
3. A registered delegate shall be permitted to speak but twice on any one subject, or any pending resolution for a period of ten minutes each, except by consent of two-thirds of the voting strength of the Convention present; provided, that the chairmen of Convention Committees may speak as frequently as necessary in connection with reports of their committees; and in the event of controversy, the presiding officer shall not entertain any motion which will curtail further debate without affording the maker of the motion or a member of the particular group presenting the resolution an opportunity for five minutes of final rebuttal.
4. All resolutions offered by individual registered delegates must bear the endorsement of the Department Commander or in his absence the Department Adjutant. All resolutions must be submitted to the office of the Adjutant General for numbering and referral to committee no later than 9:00 a.m. Thursday, August 24, 2000, and must be accompanied by a written explanation as to why the resolution was not presented to the Department Convention for consideration.
5. All resolutions offered on the floor at the Convention, or otherwise, shall be in writing, and shall automatically, and without reading, be referred to the Adjutant General for assignment to the proper committee.
6. Committee chairmen, in reporting on resolutions referred to their committee, shall first read those resolutions on which favorable action is recommended. Specific resolutions shall be set aside for individual action at the request of any delegate, the others being voted upon collectively. After action has been taken on all such resolutions, the chairman shall read the number and title of those resolutions which the committee has disapproved. A resolution disapproved by the committee shall be automatically rejected unless a motion is made and seconded that it be approved, in which case it shall be brought up for debate and Convention action.
7. This Convention will not consider any resolution dealing with

race, creed or religion, or endorse anyone for public office. This Convention will not consider any resolution calling for the expenditure or appropriation of organization funds.

8. This Convention will not consider any resolution endorsing legislation sponsored by any other veterans organization, or requesting us to join with any other organization in sponsoring legislation not expressly proposed by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
9. No person not a duly registered delegate or member of the National Convention shall participate in debate, directly or indirectly, on any subject before the Convention.
10. Unit rule of voting shall not be allowed in this Convention.
11. Voting strength shall be determined as those delegates registered as of the close of the credentials registration booth the previous day and as reported by the Credentials Committee each morning.

The Department Commanders will receive, prior to the beginning of each Business Session, a list of Posts that have properly registered delegates. Only delegates representing those Posts listed on the report will be accorded voting privileges.

12. On roll calls, the Chairman or acting Chairman of each delegation shall poll his delegation's registered delegates on the floor and shall announce the vote of his delegation.
13. Registered delegates of a delegation may arrive at a vote in any manner they see fit, but shall announce it in terms of full units and not in terms of a fractional part of a vote.
14. Reconsideration of a motion or resolution upon which final disposition has been made shall not be allowed after the session at which it was acted on has been recessed unless the body is notified of such contemplated action prior to the close of that session.
15. When the report of the chairman of the delegation is not acceptable to all registered delegates of the delegation and a poll of the Department registered delegates is demanded by three registered delegates of said Department, the Adjutant General shall poll the registered delegates, without discussion of question.
16. Voting shall be by acclamation, except when a roll call is demanded by ten registered delegates representing Posts in ten separate Departments.
17. Nominating speeches for the National Officers shall be limited to five minutes each. Not more than two seconding speeches shall be made for any candidate and such speeches shall not exceed two minutes each. Nomination and election of National Officers will be held according to the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, and Manual of Procedure, Article VI, Section

609.

18. Registered delegates and persons recognized by the Chair shall be entitled to a respectful hearing, and the Chair shall have the authority to clear the gallery or the floor or have the Sergeant-at-Arms escort from the floor any person or persons who may create any disturbances which interfere with the orderly procedure of the Convention.
19. Consent of two-thirds of the voting strength of the Convention present is necessary for suspension of the rules of this Convention.

That is proposed by our Committee and I would like to make a motion that these rules be accepted for the 101st convention.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KIMMERY: Commander-in-Chief, I am Jim Kimmery, a delegate from Post 9354 in New Mexico. I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Comrades, you have heard the motion before you. Is there any discussion on the motion? If no discussion, all in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed. The motion carried.

The Committee is now dismissed.

Comrades, we are going to have a video, but before we have that video I need to make an announcement. As you are well aware, we are going to have important dignitaries attending this meeting this morning. As you are aware, there are probably some non-members in this audience today.

Without objection, I ask for your consent that we continue with the order of business. I will say this to you that we will not discuss the By-Laws at all today, until tomorrow morning. Without objection, I would like to continue with the order of business that I have so ordered.

Please direct your attention to the big screens for greetings from the author of "The Greatest Generation" and the anchor of the NBC Nightly News with Tom Brokaw. Tom Brokaw.

(Whereupon, the video featuring Tom Brokaw was shown at this time.)

At this time I will call up for the Report of the Committee on Finance and Internal Organization, Past Commander-in-Chief Arthur J. Fellwock.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FELLWOCK: Thank you very much, Commander. According to the rules, I shall read the Resolutions that we have adopted. We adopted one Resolution, and that is Resolution 206. The title is "VFW Establish a Special Ceremony for the Handling and Disposition of the American Flag."

The Committee voted to adopt this Resolution. I make a motion that we adopt this Resolution.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SODEN: I am Ray R. Soden, Post 2149, Wood Dale, Illinois. I hereby second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: You have heard the motion before you. Is there any discussion? Is there any discussion? If there is no discussion, all in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed. The motion is carried.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FELLWOCK: I shall now read to you the Resolutions that we rejected. I will read the title to them.

Resolution 202, Elimination of Membership Benefits Discrimination.

Resolution 203, Eliminate Gender Specific Language in the VFW Congressional Charter and By-Laws and Manual of Procedure.

Resolution No. 204, Extend Age Cap for the Sons of the VFW.

Resolution No. 205, Membership Eligibility Requirements for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. We really sent this back. There could be something really good here, but we didn't have information until the last minute. It really needs more investigation and more study. So the Committee recommended this Resolution be tabled so the National Organization could do more study on this, because this could be good for us.

Resolution 207, Continue Refunding to the Post and Departments the Interest from Life Membership Dues After the Life Member is Deceased.

Resolution 208, Oral History Project.

Resolution 209, Flag Education.

Resolution 210, A By-Laws Addition.

Resolution 211, Urge Congress to Amend Our Charter to Extend Eligibility to "Cold War" Germany Veterans with Thirty Days Consecutive or Sixty Days Broken from 5 May, 1955, through 2 October, 1990.

If anyone wants any of those set aside, they will have to make a motion to adopt.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JIM MANLEY (Post 4765 - Alabama): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Jim Manley, Department Commander, Post 4765, Athens, Alabama. I make a motion that Resolution No. 201 be set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Resolution No. 201 is set aside. Is there any other Resolutions that you want to be set aside? If not, I will accept the Committee's recommendation to reject.

We will go back now to Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JIM MANLEY (Post 4725 - Alabama): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I make a motion that we adopt Resolution 201.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: To adopt 201, do we have a second?

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359 - Texas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Glen Gardner, Jr., a delegate from Post 3359, Garland, Texas. I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: The motion is seconded. I will now open it up for debate. The Committee will now give its report for rejection.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FELLWOCK: You know, these Resolutions were studied quite a bit before we actually acted on them. The

petition paper in our recommendation is that we reject, although it may be appropriate to recognize individuals who have qualified for combat pay as eligible for membership.

This would be another effort to expand eligibility to a very limited number of people. Only a few individuals have qualified for hostile fire pay and didn't otherwise qualify for membership. If we are going to Congress to seek modification of eligibility, we shouldn't do it on a small piecemeal basis.

Additionally, there is no way to verify receipts of hostile fire pay other than payroll records. That is going to be hard to get.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Any further discussion?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JIM MANLEY (Post 4765 - Alabama): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Jim Manley, Department Commander, Post 4765, Athens, Alabama. Commander-in-Chief, there is a way of verifying this. It comes in Volume 7(h), Chapter 10, DOD, Finance Management Regulations.

These periods of service are clearly identified such as the same saying that we hold in our Manual and Constitution to determine the eligibility now. We must remember that it is the individual's responsibility to come back and prove their eligibility.

This is another tool where we have the opportunity to admit four members into our organization who have received eminent danger pay or combat pay. We spend hundreds of thousands of dollars going to these foreign countries where our service members are deployed, and over 105 areas where they are receiving imminent danger pay.

We are giving out Uplink cards and telling them we support them. We could be signing these members up if this Resolution was adopted.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, comrade. Is there any further discussion?

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE DON LINSKOTT (Post 1603 - Maine): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move for rejection of this, or a further study by a Committee. What we should be doing, we should be asking the Congress to get together with the DOD, and any place that a combat action pay is given, then the AFEM should be issued.

We have opened up a great can of worms when we open up anyone that was in Korea, and eventually we are going to hurt ourselves as far as proving eligibility.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 1.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GUNNER KENT: Commander-in-Chief, I am Gunner Kent, Post 9972, Sierra Vista, Arizona. I rise to speak in favor of this Resolution. Comrades, when our Commander-in-Chief goes to these different places and we give out calling cards, we give out magazines, we give out care packages from the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and these young soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines say I would

like to join the VFW, we say you can't join.

If we wait until Congress takes 18 months to two years, the kid has forgotten all about what the VFW has done. We already have a program now where we are paying for membership, which is rightfully justified, for active duty personnel. How are we cheapening the organization by letting a comrade or a soldier, sailor, airmen or Marine that is under adverse conditions, receiving hostile fire pay, from being a member of this organization?

I don't understand how we are cheapening the organization. I don't understand why we have to do a further study on this. We can study stuff to death and we will all be dead before we get any more members. If this kid is drawing combat pay, he is just as eligible to belong to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States as I am. Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Any further discussion? If no further discussion, the motion is in order to adopt Resolution 201. All in favor will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed "no". The motion is carried.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FELLWOCK: Thank you very much. I would like to thank very much the Co-Chairman of this Committee, Past Commander-in-Chief Ray Soden. I want to thank the staff, Jim Rowoldt, for his assistance on it. Thank you very much. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief, for the appointment.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Your Committee is excused.

At this time we will go to the Report of the Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs. I call to the podium Past Commander-in-Chief James R. Currieo.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CURRIEO: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. I appreciate the opportunity to serve on this Committee and to serve this great convention on the Resolutions dealing with national security.

The Vice-Chairman of our Committee is Cooper T. Holt, Past Commander-in-Chief and Past Executive Director; and also Billy Ray Cameron, who serves as the Chairman of the POW/MIA Committee, and Jack Carney, Past Commander-in-Chief, serves as Vice-Chairman. They will give their report in just a few moments.

We met Sunday, as all the Committees did, at 1:00 p.m. and deliberated on 67 Resolutions. If you have your booklet in front of you, Resolutions 457 up to 467 may not be listed. They were new Resolutions that were brought in after the convention began.

I am going to read the title and number of the Resolutions that we recommend for approval as written and also another list approved as amended, and then we will take a vote on those. Then we will read those Resolutions, the title and number, that were rejected or referred.

Beginning with those Resolutions that were approved as written:

404, the Lessons of the Cold War.

Resolution 405, Limit Foreign Ownership of U.S. Businesses and Properties.

410, Honoring Those Who Serve.

411, Oppose Lifting the Defense Department Ban on Homosexuals in the Armed Forces.

413, Standing Firm for Democracy and Liberty.

414, National Strategy of Peace through Strength.

415, Halt the Erosion of Intelligence Services.

416, Support for the Republic of Korea.

417, Support Withdrawal from Bosnia-Herzegovina.

419, Oppose U.S. Forces Under Foreign Command.

424, Keeping Faith with the American Military.

426, NATO Enlargement.

428, Tighten U.S. Policy on High Technology Exports.

429, National Missile Defense for the United States.

430, Increase the Defense Budget.

432, Support of Self-Determination for Puerto Rico.

434, Improve Military Readiness.

436, Support the Kosovo Peace Agreement.

437, Strengthen Security at DOE Laboratories.

438, Increase Military Base Pay.

439, Oppose a Gender Integrated Basic Training.

440, U.S. Response to Chinese Threat.

441, Award Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for Service in Korea.

442, Authorization to Wear the Bunderwehr and the Land Berlin Unit Citations.

446, Retention of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences of the Department of Defense.

447, Eliminate the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.

448, Improve Theater Ballistic Missile Defense.

449, Support the Death Penalty for Acts of Treason, in War and Peace, Against the United States of America.

451, Award the Army of Occupation Service Medal for Service in Triest, Italy.

459, Oppose Lifting Economic Sanctions against North Korea.

460, Oppose Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China.

461, Oppose the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

462, Restore Vieques Naval Ranges in Puerto Rico to Full Use.

463, Support Increased Ship Building for the U.S. Navy.

464, Support the Nation's War on Drugs.

465, Oppose Assigning Women in Direct Combat Roles.

467, Support New Institute for Training Latin American Military Personnel.

Now, those were approved by the Committee as written. I will,

Commander-in-Chief, go ahead and give those Resolutions that were approved, as amended, and maybe we can take a vote on the whole block. This next list of Resolutions was approved as amended.

406, Take Action on the Immigration Problem.

These amendments, I want to add, were amendments that were primarily housekeeping amendments, or bringing the Resolution up to standards as far as the information contained in the Resolution. They did not change the intent of the Resolution.

408, Punish Terrorists Now.

409, Strategic Defense is a Strategic Priority.

412, Maintain an Effective U.S. Coast Guard.

420, Support for the Republic of China on Taiwan.

422, Retain the Selective Service.

423, Monitor the Panama Canal Carefully.

427, Require All Eighteen-Year-Old Citizens to Register for Military Draft.

444, Support the F-22 Fighter Aircraft Program.

And 454, Maintain Pressure on Castro.

These Resolutions were approved by the Committee, as amended. I move to accept the Committee's recommendation.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF COOPER T. HOLT: Commander-in-Chief, Cooper T. Holt, a member of Post 1289, Chattanooga, Tennessee, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: We have a motion and a second. That is in order. Is there any discussion on the motion before you?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOEL WALKER (Post 1904 - Wisconsin): I would like Resolutions Nos. 439 and 465 set aside, please.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Resolution No. 439 and Resolution 465 are set aside. Is there any further discussion?

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE DONALD FENTER (Post 5263 - Oklahoma): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I request we set aside all motions that have been amended and that additional motions on the Amendment 457 and above that have not been published, until it is published and the members have time to review them.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: They say they have been published. Where are they located? Has the membership seen copies of them? That is what he is asking.

Are you saying that you want all delegates to see copies of those?

COMRADE DONALD FENTER (Post 5263 - Oklahoma): I think we need to have copies of these on the floor, one for each state, so I can look at them and see what they are. Voting in the blind is not my thing.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Is there a second to the motion? Well, wait a minute. Time out. We have a motion on the floor right now. What you want to do is to set aside all adopted amended Resolutions?

COMRADE DONALD FENTER (Post 5263 - Oklahoma): All that have not been published and we don't have a copy of.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: They will be set aside and we will take appropriate action on them. What we have before us now is a motion to adopt all Resolutions that have been recommended for adoption. All in favor signify by saying "aye"; those opposed. It is so carried.

Let's move on to those that have been set aside, and those are Resolutions — excuse me. I stand to be corrected. What is your wish on the action for those that have been adopted, as amended? Who was the speaker on that motion? Let's see what the action of the floor is. We are not going to lose control here.

Go ahead and make your motion, what you would like us to do as to those that have been adopted as amended.

COMRADE DONALD FENTER (Post 5263 - Oklahoma): I made the motion that those amendments that are from 457 and above, and all those adopted, as amended, be set aside until copies of those may be furnished to the general membership so they have time to review them. We went through the same thing last year.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Is there a second to that?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOEL WALKER (Post 1904 - Wisconsin): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Joel Walker, Post 1904, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. I will second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Do you want to speak on that? Does anybody else want to speak on that? What I am getting back here, comrades, is they want to know if you would accept if they would read them from the floor instead of printing them, or do you want to take this action here today? We have motion before us. Microphone No. 2, do you want to say something?

COMRADE DONALD FENTER (Post 5263 - Oklahoma): I leave the motion as is.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: You have heard the motion before us. The motion, as I understand it, is that copies of the adopted amendments be provided to the general membership.

Is that correct?

COMRADE DONALD FENTER (Post 5263 - Oklahoma): Yes, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Any further discussion or question? Hearing none, all in favor will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed will say "nay". The motion is defeated.

...Cries of "no". ...

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: The motion before us was that they be provided to you, right? I will call for the vote again. Those that want to adopt the motion that is before them, that the adopted Resolutions, with amendments, be provided to the general membership, all in favor signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "no". The motion is defeated.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE DONALD FENTER (Post 5263 - Oklahoma): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I request a roll-call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOEL WALKER (Post 1904 - Wisconsin): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Joel Walker, Department Commander of Wisconsin, and I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Comrades, it takes ten Departments. We have two.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE BRUCE WITHERS (Department of Europe): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I also go in favor of this motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE BILL DOBBIE (Post 4659 - Michigan): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Bill Dobbie, Senior Vice Commander of Michigan, Post 4659. We are also in favor of this motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE DAVID WARE (Department of Washington): Commander-in-Chief, Washington also agrees with the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE PHIL PHILLIPS (Post 422 - Colorado): Commander-in-Chief, Phil Phillips, Post 422, Colorado. I stand for that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE ARTHUR HARRIS (Post 5179 - California): Commander-in-Chief, Art Harris, Post 5179, Department Commander from California. I support that also.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE WILLIAM TIMMONS (Post 9978 - Alaska): Commander-in-Chief, I am the Department Commander from Alaska, William Timmons. I am in favor of this motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE MIKE BURRIS (Post 2615 - North Carolina): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Mike Burris, Department Commander of North Carolina, Post 2615, I am also in favor of this motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DAN HENRY (Post 4372 - Texas): Commander-in-Chief, I am Senior Vice for the Department of Texas. We are also in favor of this motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: We have the ten. Comrades, what we are trying to do right now, the National Security Director has gone to get copies of these. We have 500 copies that will be distributed amongst the Departments. Will that meet your needs?

If you want to go for a roll-call vote, which you have indicated to us just to get the copies, we have people working on it. There are two things we can try to do. Do you want to vote on these by roll call vote to get copies? We are getting copies.

The Committee has also indicated to me they are willing on the floor

to read the "Resolved" of each of these Resolutions if that would meet your needs and concerns. In the meantime, we are going to get the Tellers lined up if that is not acceptable to each and every one of you. Give us about five or ten minutes here and we will get these Resolutions out to you.

Comrades, with your permission, so we can get the staff working on this for you, we can do one of two things. Where we have enough copies to provide to you, hopefully that will answer your concern and is basically that is what you have asked for with this amendment. What I am going to do right now, I am going to ask and try to take action on those that have been set aside.

At this time Resolution No. 439, Resolution 465 have been set aside.
Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOEL WALKER (Post 1904 - Wisconsin): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Joel Walker, Department Commander of Wisconsin. In reference to Resolution No. 439, this Resolution was —

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Commander, I need a motion to accept so that you can debate it.

COMRADE JOEL WALKER (Post 1904 - Wisconsin): I would like to make a motion to reject Resolution No. 439.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Okay. Resolution No. 439, you are moving to reject?

COMRADE JOEL WALKER (Post 1904 - Wisconsin): That is correct, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Let's debate Resolution No. 439. The motion before us is to adopt. We are debating the adoption of this Resolution.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOEL WALKER (Post 1904 - Wisconsin): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, two years ago in San Antonio this same Resolution was brought up and defeated. In fact, in the National Security and Finance Committee meeting there were members of the military that agreed that the integration or segregation of training personnel is not the problem.

The military itself is the problem, people actually doing the training themselves. It is not the problem with the individuals involved, it is the problem with the leaders. This was addressed by Lieutenant Colonel Williland from the Department of Army in the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee, and the Committee again decided to recommend adoption for this Resolution.

Two years ago in San Antonio, it was stated to the Committee that they regress, to go back to several years ago to what we used to do in the military, would cost millions and millions of dollars and set us back years in training. I stand now before you and ask that this Resolution be rejected.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Could I have the Committee Chairman explain why they adopted 439 so the delegates understand what we are debating?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CURRIEO: No. 439 is the Resolution to oppose gender integrated basic training. It does not oppose gender inte-

grated military forces. It was just felt and believed that females and males in the same unit, basic combat unit training, is not compatible.

That is the main reason that the Committee recommended to adopt the Resolution to oppose gender integrated basic training. I can read you the Resolved paragraphs if you would like.

It reads: "BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we strongly urge the Administration to consider the results of the Kassebaum-Baker study and the results of the Congressional Commission survey and reinstate separate sex basic training in the Army, the Air Force and the Navy." The Marine Corps still has separate training.

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we encourage the Department of Defense and the services to take the necessary steps to restore discipline in basic training by lifting unrealistic and counterproductive restrictions from drill instructors and other recruit trainers."

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DEBORAH WALKER (Post 1904 - Wisconsin): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Deborah Walker, Post 1904, Department of Wisconsin. Before gender integrated basic training, the training that was conducted by the United States armed services was not fair and equal.

It put many males, as well as female military members in harm's way due to the inequities of this training. It is not my belief that this training or the integration thereof should be determined by this body. We support the military. We must dedicate ourselves to support them in their decisions that they think are best for each of their military services individually. Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE WILLIAM COSTELLO (Post 641 - South Carolina): Commander-in-Chief, Bill Costello, a delegate from Post 641, Columbia, South Carolina. Having retired from the military in 1990 with 35 years of military service, I have seen this gender integrated training.

You know, we talk about the colonels telling us it is a wonderful thing. We talk about what the generals are telling us. How about getting down to the guys that have to train these people, because physiologically men and women are different.

They have different standards in their body to tell them what they can and can't do. But what we are faced with is lowering the standards of training to meet the needs of gender integrated training. I have watched this for the past twelve years fall apart.

Those drill sergeants are hampered because they cannot train the combat soldier to do his job. Thank you, Commander.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Any further discussion?

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE RON FRYE (Post 379 - Washington): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I was involved in a study at the Training and Document Command before I retired from the Army, and the study was to determine whether or not it was feasible to integrate the male and female

into the basic training units.

What we found during that time was that there was not a problem with the skills of the individuals. Most of the problems came from the individual attitudes of those that wished the system to fail. So we did some work and corrected that back then. I see now, though, that kind of an attitude has resurfaced.

In addition, we found that there were some physical limitations in the performance of some of the skills based upon not male or female, but based upon the size of the individual. You have got the horizontal ladder, and I think most of us are familiar with that.

They were blaming the ladies for failing in that. Well, the ladies were failing because they were short in many cases. But so were the short men. Those were the kinds of things we found. So I believe that we should not take integration out of our training. Those ladies have proven in service that they can do the job. Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Any further discussion?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOHN McMAHON (Post 9128 - Iowa): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am strictly opposed to this. The United States Marine Corps is the finest organization in this world, and it does not integrate their training. That is why the United States Marine Corps is at one hundred percent in their recruitment and all other branches of the military are lacking in recruiting. If we are going to maintain one hundred percent in our military, I don't believe we should integrate it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, comrade. Any further discussion?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JAMES DORAN (Post 4600 - Illinois): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am James Doran, Senior Vice Commander of Post 4600, and a delegate from Post 4600, Department of Illinois. Commander, I see a lot of things in military activities as a County Veterans Service Officer. I hear a lot of things in my daily activities as a County Veterans Service Officer.

By integrating training with men and women, we can do one of two things. We can lower the standards at which we expect our future combat infantrymen to be trained at, or we can force the ladies to work up to those standards. When we force the ladies to work up to those standards, they end up being disability discharged from the United States Army and in my office for multiple stress problems in the pelvic area.

The ladies are good for the service, but the training needs to be segregated by their physical abilities to perform such training. Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE DONALD LINSKOTT (Post 1603 - Maine): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Don Linscott, Post 1603, Auburn, Maine. I just basically have a question. It seems to me that the title of this 439 has nothing to do with the Resolution itself. The title says we oppose a gender integrat-

ed basic training. That is the title put on it.

Yet as I read it, it says that, "Be It Resolved, we strongly urge," et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, survey and reinstate separate sex basic training in the Army and the Navy. Isn't the wording of it saying that yes, we are for it, but the title is wrong? I mean, if we reject this, what are we rejecting?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CURRIEO: I read the "Resolves" just a few minutes ago. It just states simply that we stand opposed to integrated basic training for military personnel.

COMRADE DONALD LINSKOTT (Post 1603 - Maine): That is what the title says.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CURRIEO: I can read the whole Resolution again if you like. The "Whereas" is simply built up to the reasons why it is important to not have integrated basic training.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Any further discussion?

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE RICHARD KENNEDY (Post 9534 - Department of Europe): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I think that we missed the whole point here. Basic training is actually what it says. Basic training and combat infantry training is altogether different. I rest my case.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DEBORAH WALKER (Post 1904 - Wisconsin): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Deborah Walker, Post 1904, Department of Wisconsin. The issues that oppose gender integrated training that have been brought forward deal specifically with infantry positions within the United States military.

Basic training applies to all military personnel. I urge this body to consider that each individual service be allowed and recommend that they do what they feel is best for each of their services to perform the duties that have been mandated by Congress and the Commander-in-Chief of the United States. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Any further debate on the question?

We have a question at Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE CALVIN HARMAN (Post 11329 - Washington): Commander-in-Chief, Calvin Harman, VFW Post 11329, Department of Washington. I think we are nit-picking in here. A reading of the Resolution is, "Be It Resolved, that we strongly urge the Administration to consider," and to go to the Army, Air Force and Navy, and let them make the decision. That is what the Resolution states.

We cannot make that decision here on the floor. That decision has to be made by the respective armed forces service divisions. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE WARREN TELLGREN (Post 9644 - Colorado): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Warren Tellgren, Department of Colorado. I call for the question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: There has been a call for the question. We need a second.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE KENNETH PIKE (Post 4876 - Oklahoma): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: It has been moved and seconded. The motion before us is to call for the question. All in favor of calling for the question will say "aye"; all opposed. The motion is carried.

The motion before us is the adoption of the recommendation from the Committee on Resolution 439, which would say that we oppose a gender integrated basic training. All in favor will signify by saying "aye"; opposed. The "ayes" have it. The Resolution is adopted.

Resolution 465 has been set aside. At this time I will ask the Chairman to read 465.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CURRIEO: Resolution 465 is titled "Oppose Assigning Women in Direct Combat Roles." I will read the Resolved, one short paragraph.

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we go on record as opposing the assignment of women in the armed forces to combat units that directly engage the enemy, such as the infantry, armor, field artillery, Special Operations Forces, helicopters, and sub-marines."

COMRADE DONALD FENTER (Post 5263 - Oklahoma): A point of order.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Who called for the point of order?

COMRADE DONALD FENTER (Post 5263 - Oklahoma): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Don Fenter, Post 5263, Fort Sill, Oklahoma. A point of order, please. That was a set aside motion until it was published and handed out to the membership. It cannot be acted on until that time. Thank you, Commander.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: No, the motion was to set aside for the debate. We are debating that now. 465 was adopted. You set aside adoptions, as amended.

COMRADE DONALD FENTER (Post 5263 - Oklahoma): All Resolutions 457 and above, that were not published, plus all amendments that were set aside as amended, anything that has not been published is what I said.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: We understand, comrade. Thank you. What we are going to do right now, comrades, we are going to read every Resolution and adopted Resolution, and all those that have not been published, and we will take action on them one by one.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CURRIEO: I will ask the Director of the National Security and Foreign Affairs, Rocky Harder, who has been working with us on this Committee, to come forward and we will read each Resolution and explain the amendments.

Most of these amendments are housekeeping amendments, changing a word here or there, or upgrading the technical information in those Resolutions. They never changed the intent of the Resolution. We will read

each Resolution to you, as amended, just those that were recommended for approval, as amended.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE DONALD FENTER (Post 5263 - Oklahoma): Commander-in-Chief, this is not in accordance with the adoption of the motion that I made that they be set aside and published. We still do not have them published nor have we received them yet. Therefore, we should not vote on anything until that happens. That is ten states that endorsed that motion. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Well, let's get staff out there and pass them out if they are in the back. This is a great job, comrades, and I thank you for being patient. I will have no option other than to put this aside until tomorrow morning.

We are dealing with Secret Service, trying to get paperwork, trying to get tellers, and obviously with the Vice-President coming, we can't get to some of these situations. So what we are going to do, I am going to move now this Committee hold off until tomorrow morning to deal with these Resolutions that you have set before us, if that is okay, if that is your wishes.

We can't do anything. We have a roll-call vote. If you want everything to be published, we are not going to put that together in the next 15 or 20 minutes for you.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SODEN: I will move to table this until tomorrow morning and resume the discussion at that time.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: We have a motion to table. Do I have a second?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DEBORAH WALKER (Post 1904 - Wisconsin): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Deborah Walker, Department of Wisconsin, Post 1904. I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, Deborah. I appreciate that. We have a motion and a second to table. There is no debate on the tabling. All in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed. The motion has been tabled until tomorrow morning.

We are now going to General Resolutions. The Committee Chairman is Thomas Pouliot, Past Commander-in-Chief.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. I want to thank my Committee, the Committee on General Resolutions, for the fine work they did the other day on our Resolutions. Our Resolutions are numbered the 300's.

If you will look in your book under the 300 Resolutions, these are the Resolutions that my Committee considered. I want to thank my Vice-Chairmen, John Mahan and Eric Sandstrom, for their fine assistance and

support.

In making the report of this Committee, I will follow this procedure. I will first read the list of those Resolutions which the Committee recommends be adopted, or adopted as amended. We will move the adoption of those. After action is completed on those, I will read the list of those Resolutions which the Committee recommends for rejection, and then we will deal with those separately.

The Resolutions that the Committee recommends as adopted, or adopted as amended are:

Resolution 301, Action to Preserve Veterans' Back Country Access on Public Lands.

Resolution 302, National Veterans Awareness Week.

Resolution No. 304, VFW Recommends all Posts Fly POW/MIA Flag.

Resolution No. 307, United States Flag Desecration.

Resolution No. 308, Request for Congressional Review of the Federal Flag Code.

There was another Resolution, 309, that is not published. We will deal with that separately after we finish with the Resolutions that were published. So these Resolutions, 301, 302, 304, 307 and 308, at this time I recommend adoption, or adoption as amended, as recommended by my Committee. I move, Commander-in-Chief, their adoption.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN MAHAN: Commander-in-Chief, John Mahan, Post 1116, Montana. I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: You have heard the motion before you that we adopt the Committee's report. Is there any discussion? Is there any discussion? All in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed. The Committee Report is accepted.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, at this time we will now address those Resolutions that the Committee recommends rejection:

Resolution 303, Taxpayer Dollars Abused.

Resolution 305, Reduce Juvenile Violence.

Resolution No. 306, Permitting Committal Services for Deceased Non-Christian Members of Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Those three Resolutions, the Committee recommends rejection.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Is there any action on those that have been rejected? If not, they die in Committee.

COMRADE HARRY TANABE (Post 9879 - California): Commander-in-Chief, am I too late?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: No, you are not too late, comrade. What would you like to say?

COMRADE HARRY TANABE (Post 9879 - California): I am Harry Tanabe, Post 9879, San Francisco, Department of California. I would like to have Resolution 306 set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Say that number again.

COMRADE HARRY TANABE (Post 9879 - California): 306.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: It has been set aside, 306. We will now open up debate on 306, comrade.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DONALD WAKILA (Post 8499 - California): Commander-in-Chief, my name is Donald Wakila, Post 8499, out of Fresno, Department of California. I am the one —

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Comrade, I need a motion on the floor to accept, to adopt.

COMRADE DONALD WAKILA (Post 8499 - California): I request the motion to adopt this Resolution.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: The motion is in order. Do we have a second?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE HARRY TANABE (Post 9879 - California): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, comrades. The motion is in order. It is up for debate. I will now ask the Chairman of the Committee to give his report.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. Resolution No. 306 is a short one, and I will read it in its entirety. It is "Permitting Committal Services for Deceased Non-Christian Members of Veterans of Foreign Wars.

"WHEREAS, the By-Laws of the Veterans of Foreign Wars presently permits military funerals for its deceased members only in the Christian faith; and

"WHEREAS, non-Christian deceased members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars are deprived of committal services conducted by their ministers in form, practice and words of their religious faith;

"NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that committal services at grave site funeral services for non-Christian deceased members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars may be conducted by the minister of the religious faith embraced by the deceased member in form, practice and in words customarily used at funerals of the faith, when so requested by the family of the deceased."

This was submitted by the Department of California, and the intent of this Resolution is to permit non-Christian VFW committal services for deceased VFW non-Christian members.

Our discussion at the Committee meeting related to the fact that if we should pass this Resolution at all, it might be in violation of our own by-laws. We suggested and recommended that these persons interested in this submit an amendment to our By-Laws and to our Ritual, and then there was even discussion that our Ritual and By-Laws already sufficiently address this issue, that there might be language in our By-Laws and Ritual where non-Christian VFW committal services can be performed for VFW members. So that was the reason that this Committee recommended rejection of this Resolution.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE HARRY TANABE (Post 9879 - California): With the understanding as presented to us now, I believe the point is well in order that, yes, we accept the rejection and go forward as you specified, because a minister can conduct in the faith that the family has requested.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: You are pulling your motion off the floor?

COMRADE HARRY TANABE (Post 9879 - California): So I would like to withdraw my motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: How about the seconder?

COMRADE DONALD WAKILA (Post 8499 - California): The seconder will withdraw the second.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Okay. 306 is now rejected.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrades. Our Committee also addressed Resolution 309. At this time I will read Resolution 309, which has not been published.

"Korean War Veterans' National Charter.

"WHEREAS, the Korea War Veterans' Association was founded in 1985 in New York; and

"WHEREAS, the purpose is to serve and represent the over six million American men and women that fought in the Korea War; and

"WHEREAS, 54,246 American soldiers lost their lives and another 92,206 were wounded, and 8,177 were listed as missing in action prisoners of war; and

"WHEREAS, the Korean War Veterans Association was denied a Congressional Charter in 1989; and

"WHEREAS, the Korea War Veterans Association is the only major war faction that has been refused a Congressional Charter; and

"WHEREAS, the full United States Senate unanimously approved the issuance by adoption of Senate Bill 620; and

"WHEREAS, the companion bill, House Resolution 1671, has been tied up in the Subcommittee on Immigration and Claims since May 4, 1999; and

"WHEREAS, the granting of this charter would not be any expense to the United States Government;

"NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we support and recommend passage of House Resolution 1671 to grant a Congressional Charter by the House of Representatives to the Korean War Veterans Association; and

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we allow the Association the privilege of bargaining rights in Washington equal to all other veterans organizations."

This was submitted by the Department of Maryland. The intent of the Resolution is to urge the Congress to grant the Congressional Charter to the Korean War Veterans Association with equal rights as all other national veterans organizations. Our Committee recommends adoption, and I so move.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: We need a second.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE LARRY SCUDDER (Post 1273 - South Dakota): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Any debate on the issue? Any debate on the issue? The motion is to adopt. All in favor of this adoption signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed. The motion carried.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: At this time the General Resolutions Committee will reconvene. We have been given a Resolution to consider. Our Committee stays in office until this convention is over. This Committee will meet right now in Room 101 for us to consider a Resolution that we have been given. So all members of the General Resolutions Committee, we will reconvene in Room 101 at this time. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

The title of the Resolution is "The Spirit of Patriotism Crusade," and it was transferred to our Committee from the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Cont'd.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Comrades, we will go back to the National Security and Foreign Affairs motion that was on the floor. What we are doing right now, we are getting copies of all the Resolutions and their amendments. We are getting copies of all of those that were not printed in the booklet. They will be distributed to each and every one of the Department Commanders this afternoon before you leave.

The first order of business tomorrow is a roll-call vote, if it is still necessary. That will be the first order of business tomorrow morning on the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee. So give them at least another hour and each Commander will be given copies of them.

John Senk will make some announcements.

...Convention Announcements. ...

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Comrades, sisters and the friends, will you please welcome the National President and line officers of the Ladies Auxiliary, Lorraine Frier.

PRESENTATION OF VFW POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE AWARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: At this time for a presentation of a special award, I call on the Chairman of the Political Action Committee, Neale Deibler and the Director of the Political Action Committee, Jack Carney, Past Commander-in-Chief.

COMRADE NEALE DEIBLER: Good morning. Commander-in-Chief, National Officers, Distinguished Guests and Delegates to this Convention:

Commander-in-Chief, I thank you for the appointment to this

Committee and the opportunity to serve this great organization. Last year when you appointed me Chairman of the VFW-PAC Committee, you said to me, "I hope you will still be smiling come September." September is only a few days away, Commander, and I am still smiling because the PAC is back due to a lot of hard work by the Board members.

They are Past Commander-in-Chief John Stang from Kansas; Robert Loftus from Florida; Leslie Eskildsen from Montana; Assad Allie from Michigan; John Dahman from Indiana; Gerald E. Jonas as Treasurer, from Virginia; Past National President and Director of the Ladies Auxiliary to the VFW-PAC, Rosemary Mazer from New Jersey, Past Commander-in-Chief and PAC Director, my boss, John "Jack" Carney from Florida.

I represent the State of Pennsylvania. We have made a lot of progress this year. Much of that progress has been due to the return of the Ladies Auxiliary to the PAC program. Thank you, ladies. Many of our comrades realize the importance of our interaction with the Congress and have increased contributions.

The ladies have more than tripled the amount of funds contributed to the VFW-PAC by our members. God bless the Ladies Auxiliary for their support that they are giving to the PAC.

We thank the Military Order of the Cootie for their contribution this year and ask for their continuing support. Everyone is aware of the work they do in the hospitals, but it is equally important that those hospitals remain open and available to veterans.

Commander-in-Chief, our work will not be complete until we have the cooperation of our comrades in the VFW to support in a non-partisan effort those in Congress that support our goals and our needs. These same comrades have been so generous in supporting so many programs of the VFW we believe that if they understand what we are doing and why we need their help they will do the right thing.

The Departments have received more information than ever before, so that they would have an opportunity to provide input in the endorsement process. As of today, 28 Departments replied to our request to approve or disapprove an endorsement of a previous legislator.

We need a lot of improvement in this area. We thank you, Commander-in-Chief, in this "New Century of Service" for speaking out on many occasions on the importance of maintaining an active Political Action Committee. We believe it has made a positive effect in our effort to inform our membership in a sincere non-partisan way exactly who our friends are in the Congress.

Many people do not have an understanding of what the PAC does and in its non-partisan approach to supporting candidates. I invite and, in fact, I urge them to attend the PAC Workshop tomorrow at 2:00 p.m. in Room 203, D and E, at the Midwest Express Center.

Commander-in-Chief, in appreciation of the support you have given to the Political Action Committee, we have a gift for you. The eagle was chosen in 1782 as a symbol to be used in the great seal of the United States,

and it is our pleasure to present that symbol to you this morning in the form of our Golden Eagle Award.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: At this time let me say thank you, Neale, for serving as Chairman of this Committee, and especially a special thanks to a man who has really dedicated a lot of time to the position of Director, Past Commander-in-Chief Jack Carney. Thank you, Jack.

Now, I will call upon the Adjutant General for remarks.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. First, I would like to remind the members of the National Council of Administration that they are invited to participate in the Patriotic Rally this evening by marching with the National Officers.

We would ask that you be at the arena by 5:00 o'clock. There is an open house at the Mitchell Field Military Installation of military planes and equipment on display Wednesday, August 23rd, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The location is at Mitchell Field.

Round-trip transportation is going to be provided between Mitchell Field and the Hilton Hotel downtown across from the Midwest Express Center. Soldiers and airmen will be available to answer questions and provide information concerning the role of reserved components in the national defense.

Comrades, if I might, I would ask that those of you standing in the aisle ways, please come in and take your seats so we can have quiet out there when we have our speakers. The Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs is on his way to the hall right now. He will be the next person on the agenda, and we would like to have you seated and quiet for his presentation.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HONORABLE HERSHEL GOBER,
ACTING SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS,
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Comrades, sisters and friends, could I have your attention, please: We are now honored to have as our next guest the Acting Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Hershel W. Gober.

Secretary Gober is a veteran of service in the United States Marine Corps and the United States Army. During two tours in Vietnam, he received a Purple Heart, a Bronze Star, and the Soldier's Medal. He is a Life Member of VFW Post 4515, Monticello, Arkansas.

Prior to his appointment as the Acting Secretary, Mr. Gober served as the Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs. During his time at the VA he has spearheaded programs to increase care and assistance to veterans, streamline management policies, and the formation of a Web-based education system for all VA employees.

He is the architect of "One VA", an employee of empowerment program designed to provide better and more timely care to America's veterans. His "Scissors" program recognizes those VA employees who cut red

tape and improve the delivery of services to veterans and their families.

In addition to his duties in the Department of Veterans Affairs, Secretary Gober has led presidential commissions to Vietnam in search of answers to the POW/MIA questions.

Comrades, sisters and friends, will you please join me in giving a warm VFW welcome to the Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Hershel W. Gober.

Mr. Gober.

REMARKS BY THE HONORABLE HERSHEL W. GOBER

ACTING SECRETARY GOBER: Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief John Smart.

National Officers, Distinguished Guests, Comrades and Sisters, Ladies and Gentlemen, and especially my folks from Arkansas, where are you all? I love you. If it were not for those people right there and my good friends in New Hampshire, I wouldn't be standing here today, and I know that. I thank all of you for everything.

You know, I want to thank you, Commander-in-Chief Smart, for that introduction. It has been a pleasure to work with you over this past year. It has been a pleasure to be your friend for several years. I want to thank the VFW for the great work that you do for veterans every day.

I want to thank you for your Operation Uplink, for your wonderful volunteers in the VA Medical Centers all across this country, for your Veterans Service officers, who make sure that the veterans file their claims correctly, and they keep us on a straight and narrow.

I want to thank you for your great scholarship programs through the Voice of Democracy for the youth of this country, and for your work in the Junior and Special Olympics. You know, when I left Arkansas in 1993, headed for Washington, I came with one goal, and that was to improve the way the VA served the veteran families.

That has not changed. I want to open doors for veterans, and I am not in the business of closing doors for veterans. You know, we have not always had a perfect set of direction, but I can assure you that we are on the right road. We want to increase the quality of VA health care and access to it, to fix the way we process benefit claims, to make national cemeteries more available to veterans and their families, and to maintain them as national shrines, and to make sure that every taxpayer gets the benefit of dollar for dollar.

Today one thing is certain. Our nation's veterans and their families are better off than they were seven and one-half years ago when I got to Washington, D.C. Here is some of the reasons I can say that. Eight years ago, VA and your organization began a partnership together, the kind of partnership that had never existed before.

In March, 1993, we set new ground rules for this partnership. From that time on a regulation has not been written without the input from the

VFW. Benefits on health-care issues would not be made unless the VFW was involved in the decision-making process in the beginning and informed of final decisions before they were announced.

VA's Advisory Boards would be fully staffed, made up of veterans and veterans advocates. And they would not be "rubber stamps," but fully involved in the decision-making process, with their recommendations taken seriously. I am proud to say we have not broken any of those ground rules.

As a result, we have created a partnership that has done great things for our nation's veterans. It is the partnership we all envisioned when VA became a member of the President's Cabinet. Thank you for working with us to make it happen.

In the area of health care, our department provides greater access for better care to more veterans than ever. Eight years ago, in 1993, VA treated 2.7 million veterans. This year we will treat 3.6 million. Eight years ago, the VA operated 182 community-based outpatient clinics. Today, we have 670, and we are adding new clinics at a rate of more than one a week.

More than four million veterans are enrolled in VA's health-care system, a plan that did not exist before 1998, and that has given every honorably discharged veteran the opportunity to be treated at a facility. I think this is very important.

You will remember in 1986 they classified you as A, B, C veterans, and veterans classified as "C" could not be treated. I am pleased to tell you that today every VFW member in this audience, honorably-discharged veterans, have access to the VA health-care system, and you can get it at 1,200 locations all across this country. That is something that we all wanted and that is something we have done together.

It used to make me very angry that they classified us as A, B and C, because when we went in the military they didn't ask us how much money we had; all they asked you — I went in the Marine Corps, so they asked me if I could walk and chew gum. I said, "Yeah."

Now, all of us can go there and be treated, and we are doing it, and the surveys that have been done by independent agencies tell us that veterans are 80 percent more satisfied today with their health care than they were two years ago.

We have created an unparalleled system of long-time care services for our aging veterans. These include nursing home care, private residential care and assisted living programs.

The Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act has required us to focus on this issue. This is very important to many of you. Veterans with service-connected disabilities that require them to enter nursing homes or veterans who have disability rating of 70 percent or higher, are guaranteed, I repeat, guaranteed long-term care under the provision of that Act.

I think there was some misinformation yesterday. This Act is fully funded already. It is included in the budget that the President sent to Congress, and now all Congress has to do is to act on it. So the bill is fully funded

and we will be able to start taking care of the veterans.

In the past eight years, we have revolutionized VA health care. But we are not done yet. We have pledged to ensure that all veterans will receive an initial or first-time appointment within 30 days; no veteran will have to wait more than 30 days for an appropriate physician appointment; and all veterans will be seen within 20 minutes of their scheduled appointments.

I know in all cases we are not meeting that. But that is our goal and we are going to push for it. In the area of the benefits, I cannot report to you as much progress as I would like to, but I would like to tell you this: When we came into office in 1993, we inherited a claims backlog of more than 500,000 claims.

It took more than 300 days to work an average original claim. We are now receiving claims at the rate — new claims at the rate of about 2,000 every month. More than 2.6 million veterans are receiving compensation for disabilities. That is more than ever in the nation's history.

Despite that, we have reduced the backlog by more than 200,000 and processing average claims in about 160 days. That is still not good enough. But because we have turned the VA into a real advocate for veterans, we have been able to respond to veterans' needs by cutting the red tape and rules that stood in their way when we came into office.

You know, Jesse Brown and I came to this Department as an advocate. Official Washington didn't like that much. But you know and I know that the VA cannot work if it is not an advocate for the people that we serve. That is our legacy. I can't tell you how many times we have had a decision that we had to make where it was either to go with the bureaucracy or go with the needs of veterans, and we always went with the veterans.

Improvements in the national cemetery system: Last year, unfortunately, 561,000 veterans died, more than 1,500 a day. Many of these are our World War II veterans. It is, therefore, critical that our national cemeteries meet the expanded need for additional burial space for veterans.

In the last two years, VA has opened three new national cemeteries, with a fourth scheduled to be dedicated on September 10th. We are planning new cemeteries in six states: Georgia, Michigan, Florida, California, Oklahoma and Pennsylvania.

When these cemeteries are built, they will mark the greatest level of expansion our nation has seen since Abraham Lincoln was President during the Civil War. We have also set ourselves a goal. We don't want them just to be cemeteries. We want them to be national shrines where our young people can go and see who it is that they really owe this great freedom that we have and the great prosperity that we have in this nation.

It is the people, the veterans, the men and women who have worn the uniform of their country who have made this country great. Our fiscal year 2001 budget is good. The President has submitted a \$1.5 billion increase after the 2000 budget. This is the largest single increase ever proposed by any President for veterans programs.

There are other things that we want to improve. We have worked to

reduce the problem of homeless veterans across the country. Folks, I can tell you we have started to make a difference. You know, we are the only federal agency that provides direct hands-on assistance to the homeless.

In 2000, we will have spent more than \$150 million in support of our own homeless programs, and since 1994 we have put out more than \$41 million to organizations in 42 states and the District of Columbia. People that are already helping homeless vets in your community, we are giving them money to help more, and we are making a difference.

We have made great strides in caring for our Gulf War veterans with undiagnosed illnesses. For the first time in the history we are paying those veterans that we cannot diagnose with an illness compensation. Never before has that been done in history.

We now service connect twelve illnesses related to Agent Orange exposure in Vietnam as opposed to only four in 1993. And children of Vietnam veterans who are suffering from spina bifida also receive compensation.

We have revised and expanded the evaluation criteria for service connected residual effects of injuries from exposure to intense cold. I know this is of particular interest to you veterans who were with the chosen few in Korea. We have service connected more than 2,000 veterans with illnesses that veterans have said are the results of exposure to atomic radiation; and provide special examinations, including a complete physical and all necessary tests, for qualified veterans.

We were active participants in the coalition that restored military honors at funerals for veterans. We are forming our department into "one VA" so that you have seamless care, so in the future you will be able to go to a hospital and you will be able to check on your benefits.

You will be able to go to a benefits office and check on your health-care eligibility, or the same thing at the cemetery. Here is something that I think you will all like. Let's say you live in Togus, Maine, and you decide to go on vacation down to Florida, and you drive down the road and you get to the Boston Hospital and you get sick.

You already have enrolled in Togus but you go in the hospital there and you have to fill out 1010M, that is a long form that gives them all the information. Then you go down to Washington, D.C., and you get there and you are ill again. You have go to in and you fill out another 1010 form.

You go on down all the way to Florida, and you fill out a form at every hospital you go to. Well, you will not have to do that much longer because we are going to have a card that you are going to carry in your pocket like your credit card.

When you walk into that VA facility, they are going to swipe it through this machine and it will tell you you are service connected, what your blood type is and any other allergies and things like that that you have. So you swipe that card and you will walk out. I think that is going to be a boom for all of us. We don't like paperwork. We have wanted to reduce it.

It will also come in handy when you pass away. Your wife will not have to dig through all of your files and find these things. All you will do is take it to the National Cemetery office and they will run it through the machine there, and it will say yes, this is a service-connected hero and he or she is eligible for burial in our cemeteries. It will help you in your benefits. We have done a lot of great things, but we still have a lot of things to do.

I would be very remiss if I didn't thank the VFW for your sponsors of the Golden Age Games. For those of you who have not seen it, it is just one of the greatest things that you can ever go see. It is a perfect example of how we are partnering with the VFW.

I really want to thank Commander-in-Chief Smart. I want to thank you and all the national officers and the Council of Administration for the work that you have done in making sure that we can continue to provide those veterans out there with the opportunities of the Golden Age Games.

In conclusion, you know, we have done a lot of great things, this past seven and one-half years passed very rapidly for me. It seems like only yesterday that I got here. I only have five more months to serve as the Acting Secretary, but I don't intend to be a caretaker, because I am a tax-paid plus personality, and I can do a lot of things in five months.

I can assure you that there will be some good decisions made for veterans. They will not be any decisions made going against veterans, I will assure you of that. Everybody knows when they bring a piece of paper to me that has to be a policy for veterans, there is one line on the bottom of that page.

It says, "This initiative is good or not good for veterans." They have to circle one of those. If they circle the one that says it is not good for veterans, they just as well not send it to me, because it is going to go right back downstairs.

We are not going to do anything to hurt the veterans. I am very fortunate I have had the opportunity to serve you and serve the other veterans of this country. I am deeply humbled by it and I am very appreciative by it, and I have tried to do what the President, who gave us our mission, and we have a very simple mission. It was given to us by one of our greatest Presidents.

Our mission is simply to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widows and his orphans. There is nothing else. We have no other agenda. I have enjoyed doing that for the past seven and one-half years, and I look forward to the next five months.

Again, I want to close by thanking the VFW for everything that you do for the youth of this country, for what you have done in the past in defending this country, and for you World War II and Korean veterans out there, for giving me my freedom.

To my Vietnam brethren, I want to thank you for your service. Those who have served since, I thank all of you, and God bless you and God bless America.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Mr. Secretary, thank you for sharing

those remarks with us this morning. As always, I can assure you that the VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary will be there for you when it comes to whatever you need to care for America's true heroes, our fellow veterans. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

ACTING SECRETARY GOBER: It has been a real pleasure to be with you-all today.

VFW HALL OF FAME AWARD, GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION
PRESENTED TO MR. RICHARD CRENNNA

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Comrades, sisters and friends, I am indeed honored to present the VFW Hall of Fame Award to Richard Crenna.

The name Richard Crenna has appeared in the list of credits for radio shows, TV series and movies for many years. Some of you will remember him from the radio show "Date With Judy." Others will recall his days in such shows as "Our Miss Brooks," "The Real McCoys," and "Slattery's People."

His movies include "John Goldfarb, Please Come Home," "Marooned," "Star," "Red Sky At Morning," "Doctors' Wives," "Table For Five," "Wait Until Dark," "Body Heat", and as Colonel Trautman in the "Rambo" movies with that other famous star.

As an actor and director, he has brought a wealth of good entertainment to the radios, TVs and theater screens of America. Three nominations for Golden Globe Awards, his star in the Hollywood Walk of Fame, and the admiration of millions of fans attest to his success.

A veteran of service in the United States Army in World War II, Richard Crenna continues to serve his country and those who defend it as this year's chairman of the VA's 2000 National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans.

My comrades, sisters and friends, will you please give a warm VFW welcome to a World War II veteran, a great actor and director, and a great American, Richard Crenna. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The citation being presented to Mr. Crenna reads:

"The Hall of Fame Award, Gold Medal and Citation, presented to Richard Crenna in special recognition of his sincere commitment and desire to bring awareness to the needs of veterans, as evidenced by his selection as National Chairman of the 2000 Salute to Hospitalized Veterans, his ongoing concern for their comprehensive medical care, and his challenge to all Americans to visit VA Hospitals and become volunteers to aid and comfort our nation's true heroes.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 22nd day of August, 2000. Approved by the National Council of Administration." It has been signed by Commander-in-Chief Smart and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - MR. RICHARD CRENNNA

MR. CRENNNA: Well, thank you very, very much. It is a very humbling experience for me to be here in the presence of my fellow veterans. I have had the pleasure of meeting General Colin Powell and General Schwarzkopf. I asked them why I never got a Good Conduct Medal.

They said, "Did you deserve one?" I said, "I don't think so." But I have had the privilege of playing in the movies over the last many, many years a submariner, a paratrooper, a captain of a gunboat at Yatzi, an astronaut.

So, I think I qualify as somewhat of a Veterans of Foreign Wars. Also having spent three pictures with Sylvester Stallone. You know, I also know I need three Oak Leaf Clusters. Thank you very much. It is a very humbling experience. As I said, with the awards that were mentioned earlier, this one will be at the top of my list.

I thank the VFW for the wonderful work they do, the volunteerism. Your Ladies Auxiliary contributes over one million hours every year to volunteer work in VA hospitals. For that, God bless them and thank you very, very much. Thank you all, and God bless you and God bless America.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Mr. Crenna, on behalf of the VFW — Richard, can I have your attention, please? He still knows how to take orders. On behalf of the VFW, we are proud to present this check for \$5,000 for your favorite charity.

MR. RICHARD CRENNNA: Well, thank you very much, John. And my favorite charity is the VFW. I am giving this money back to you, and I hope that it will be used for veterans administration, the Veterans Affairs Hospitalized Veterans Program. Thank you very much for this for them. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF CHECK FOR \$2.5 MILLION
TO AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENT COMMISSION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Comrades, sisters and friends, twenty-six months ago, the VFW launched our campaign to fulfill a \$7.5 million pledge to the World War II Memorial. This is the largest commitment by any veterans group and the second largest pledge by any organization or individual.

The VFW currently has more than \$4.6 million in pledges, contributions and matching gifts. We anticipate adding another \$1 million next year from entirely new sources.

With that in mind, I am proud to present this check for \$2.5 million as the first installment on our pledge.

Here to accept our first check is a Life Member of the VFW and the spokesman for the World War II Memorial, a friend of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and all veterans across this country, Senator Robert Dole, accompanied by the Executive Director of the American Battle Monuments Commission, Kenneth S. Pond.

REMARKS BY THE HONORABLE ROBERT DOLE

SENATOR DOLE: John, thank you very much. I am not the Vice-President, I am here for some other reason today. So this is a great organization, as everybody here knows, and I am very proud to be a part of it and have been for a long, long time.

I understand about half of your members are World War II veterans, and we are very, very proud of what is being accomplished and we are particularly proud of receiving this big, big check. As indicated, you are the second largest contributor next to Wal-Mart, and many of your members helped raised the money for Wal-Mart. So you have done a pretty good job.

I also want to acknowledge the gift received today from Harley-Davidson, which is a gift through the VFW World War II Memorial Matching Gift program, and they are putting up \$250,000 and you are matching it with \$125,000, so that is another \$375,000 that I will be taking back to the Memorial Committee, too. So that is another big boost by the VFW in the matching funds. We certainly thank Harley-Davidson.

I also want to thank Adjutant General John Senk and Assistant Adjutant General Ron Browning for initiating and managing the VFW superb efforts in support of the World War II Memorial.

Let me, and I don't need any notes for this, I know pretty much about what is happening in the World War II generation. We have been called the greatest generation and we accept that, but we understand that other generations to follow, if they have the same challenge as we had when we were 17, 18 and 19, would probably be the greatest generation.

We acknowledge the great contributions made by Korean veterans and Vietnam veterans, and World War I veterans, Somalia veterans, Gulf War veterans. Any conflict we have had, we have recognized the devotion to duty and the courage of America's veterans.

But we are also a disappearing generation. We have gone from 16.5 million World War II veterans to less than six million. We are about 5.5 million now, and every day about 1,000 to 1,200 World War II veterans are gone. So there is some urgency in building this memorial.

We don't need a memorial, World War II veterans, but we want something there, something dignified to remember the greatest event in this century, the event that gave us freedom and liberty, the event that preserved freedom and liberty throughout the world, and even beyond that we want our children and our grandchildren to understand when they visit that memorial or read about it, or see it on television, that my father or my grandfather, or somebody in my family was there.

We want to remind them that sometime in your life, whether you are a man or a woman, whether in uniform or not, you may be called upon to make a sacrifice. That sacrifice may be with your life or you may live with a life of disability. That's the meaning of the World War II Memorial. It is going to be dignified. It is going to be about peace. It is going to be about

strength. It is going to be about unity. That is the importance of this gift.

Let me just say one other thing as I conclude. We have talked to a number of CEOs, of course, and we have had a lot of response from corporate presidents and others. We have had 400,000 individual contributors. Some of these people say, "Well, Bob, you know, it is a great idea and I want to thank you for what you are doing, but it just doesn't fit our guidelines."

I have not said it, but I have thought about it, saying, "Well, World War II didn't fit our guidelines either but we did it. We did it and because we did it you are prospering today." (Applause)

There is one group in America that we have not heard from yet, and maybe it is a mistake we have made, but that is the Hollywood group. They are making all the money on these movies, but we can't get a dime out of these people in Hollywood.

So if you know any of these big stars or these people, except Tom Hanks, because he has gone out of his way. His father served in the Navy. If you know any of these people, write a letter and tell them to put a little money in the pot. They have made millions and millions of dollars on these movies and we only want a little of it, maybe a million here and there.

Finally, let me say this. We are within \$3 million, \$4 million or \$5 million of our goal. We will have the ground breaking this Veterans Day. We hope to have the dedication in the year 2002. We want you to start making reservations. Strom Thurmond has already made a reservation. He is going to be there. He is only 98 years of age. If he can do it, you can do it.

But above all, our hats are off to this great organization, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Auxiliary, who has been very helpful, too, not just the men, but the Auxiliary. We thank you and God bless you and God bless America.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: I am indeed honored now to bring to the podium for a presentation James Ziemer, Vice-President and Chief Financial Officer of Harley-Davidson Motorcycle Company. Please give him a warm welcome.

PRESENTATION BY HARLEY-DAVIDSON MOTORCYCLE COMPANY

MR. JAMES ZIEMER: Thank you. Good morning. It is quite an honor for me to be here addressing such a huge crowd of gathering of American heroes. On behalf of Harley-Davidson, let me welcome you to our hometown. I would have liked to have rode down the aisle this morning on a Harley-Davidson to welcome you, but I couldn't make it through the metal detector.

On more serious notes, two of the things that Harley-Davidson stands for are freedom and independence. Isn't it interesting these are the same things that Americans have been fighting for since 1776? Maybe it is the

interest in keeping the spirit of independence alive that has connected veterans with Harley-Davidson throughout the company's history.

Harley-Davidson has been a part of our military heritage since 1916. When World War I called and started, Harley-Davidson answered the call. When World War II started, Harley-Davidson was quick to respond again. In the process of setting records for military motorcycle production, Harley-Davidson earned the coveted "E Award" for service to the U.S. armed forces.

In the process of serving our country, Harley-Davidson built a tremendous bond with people who used their motorcycles as part of their duty: the scouts, the messengers and lots of soldiers who snuck a Harley out of camp for a ride. They all built a long-lasting bond with the Harley-Davidson motorcycle.

That bond between rider and Harley-Davidson is one of the main reasons for the company's success today. We realize the importance of that bond. We realize the importance of people involved, the people who fought for freedom and independence throughout our country's history.

Let me speak for just a moment about one group of those people, the veterans of World War II. The veterans who don't have a memorial in Washington, D.C., who will be referred to as our greatest generation, and who have given our country some of its greatest leaders.

Harley-Davidson wants to make sure this special group of veterans receives the recognition you deserve. To help that, as Senator Dole said, through the VFW Matching Program the Harley-Davidson Foundation is donating a quarter of a million dollars to the National World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C.

SENATOR DOLE: I want to say that my Co-Chairman in this effort has been Fred Smith, the CEO of FedEx. He has been a great help and a great Vietnam record. He particularly wanted to acknowledge this gift. We appreciate it very much. I could have used all that money in my campaign in '96. (Laughter)

But this is a greater campaign. This means a lot more to me right now than anything else. We thank you very much. Thank you.

MR. JAMES ZIEMER: Thank you. This gift cannot possibly express all the appreciation that we at Harley-Davidson feel toward these noble servicemen. We feel honored to recognize them at the National World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. I thank everybody.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Jim, thank you so much, and please thank Harley-Davidson for caring and making this generous donation to the World War II Memorial.

MR. JAMES ZIEMER: Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HONORABLE CHUCK HAGEL, SENATOR FROM NEBRASKA

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: It is indeed my honor to introduce

now a Senator from Nebraska, the Honorable Chuck Hagel.

The Vietnam War was long and bitter, but it produced a lot of heroes and a lot of people who went on to become leaders of our country. Our next guest is one of those leaders, Senator Chuck Hagel from the staff of Nebraska.

Described by columnist George Will as a "Rising Star in the Republican Party," and by columnist Mark Shields as "an independent and a reformer," and as a Senator who "embodies honor and duty," Senator Hagel brings to his present position years of experience in the private sector and in the federal government.

In 1981, President Reagan appointed him Deputy Administrator of the Veterans Administration. Today, Senator Hagel serves on four Senate Committees: Foreign Relations; Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs; Health Education, Labor and Pensions; and the Special Committee on Aging.

Elected to the Senate in 1996, he was hailed as the Top Senate Freshman in 1998. From the board rooms of the business world to the halls of Congress, Senator Hagel has shown himself to be a true leader, with a vision of a better America.

We are indeed proud to welcome the Senator to this gathering of combat veterans. As an infantry squad leader in Vietnam, he earned two Purple Hearts. Let's give a warm VFW welcome to a VFW Life Member, Senator Chuck Hagel from the great State of Nebraska.

REMARKS BY THE HONORABLE CHUCK HAGEL

SENATOR HAGEL: Thank you very much. Good morning and thank you. First, let me thank the VFW for your generous gift to my friend, Bob Dole's efforts, and to Bob Dole and to Fred Smith, Harley-Davidson and others who are, in fact, making this long overdue memorial to the greatest generation a reality. Thank you.

I am proud to be a Life Member of this organization. I am grateful to be here. My father served in World War II in the 13th Army Air Corps in the South Pacific. If he were alive today, he would be one of those leading the effort to not only raise money and harness the resources and the leadership to accomplish this very noble objective, but to do what so many of you have done with your lives and continue to do is to contribute to something bigger than your own self-interest.

If there was ever a cohesive bond that has united the World War II generation our nation, our 200-year tradition and heritage, and the VFW, surely, it is that. To always, always seek the high ground of noble effort and being part of something bigger than one's own self interest.

So to all of you, the quiet heroes of our time, the veterans from all wars, I thank you. I am proud to be one of you. I always appreciate having an opportunity to hang around with Senator Dole for you like rich friends, influential friends, as he goes all over the United States picking up the mil-

lion-dollar checks.

Eventually, it trickles down to some of us meager mortals, not the God-like figures like Dole, but the rest of us. It is, in fact, an honor to be with Bob Dole today, and as we flew out here this morning from Washington we talked about the efforts that he is making, the efforts that you are making and the future of this country.

For my opportunity here at the podium this morning, I want to take just a couple of minutes to share some thoughts with you about our country and our future, and the role the VFW has yet to play in helping to shape the future of this country and helping shape the future of the world.

We are living at a time when the rate of change is almost incalculable. You all know that from every discipline and walk of life that you represent here this morning that we are having difficulty with keeping pace with those global challenges. Most are for the better.

But it presents America, the great beacon of hope and the freedom still around the world, with many new challenges, just as it presented the World War II generation with those challenges fifty years ago. Those challenges, first, are to develop and hone a national defense policy, a national security policy.

That, of course, is the guarantor of our foreign policy. It is the guarantor of America's role in the world, our national interests, and those challenges that are out there that are new, that were not there twenty years ago, thirty years ago, certainly fifty years ago are different.

The world's dynamic, its changes, so we must shift and the change with that to make our defense policy relevant to the challenges of our time. Today, we live in a borderless world. All six billion of us interconnected. Now, there is great hope in that, great opportunity in that.

But also a more complicated set of challenges to our national security policy, weapons of mass destruction. Still there are authoritarian, totalitarian dictators, who are evil, who would use those weapons of mass destruction to no good and positive end.

The scourge of our time of illegal drug trafficking, all of those dynamics that face us today that are different, represent a new set of threats and challenges. Our national security must fit into the overall relevant understanding of those challenges and to do that we must work closely with our allies. We must understand those threats.

We must know that today it is not just military strength, but economic strength, geo political relationships, and still the one thing that has made this a great nation, the greatest nation on earth, that is one all the great threats that have been presented and have challenged our nation, naked aggression and brutality, totalitarianism, along with all the technology and all the force and all the power and all the strength and leadership, it has always been anchored with American ideals.

American ideals has been the foundation of this nation's strength. National missile defense, do we need national missile defense? We do need national missile defense. We need a national missile defense that is

relevant to the challenges.

We are going to need our allies to be a part of that. If we are to have a national missile defense, as we have talked about and we are testing for, that means we are going to need forward base radar, most likely in Greenland, most likely in Britain.

We can't do this unilaterally. This must be done in a way that incorporates and brings the partnership of our allies with us. But underpinning that, in all the new resources and all the new commitment of the next commander-in-chief and the Congress, to prioritize national security and the quality of life of our young men and women, and recruitment, retention and readiness, all requiring new and more resources, leadership.

The most fundamental challenge yet ahead of us, and that is to rebuild a culture in this country that has always made duty, honor, country more than a model; duty, honor, country more than a slogan. Duty, honor, country is a way of life.

Men and women, who commit themselves and their families to this country through their proud service in the military, understand that this is not just a job, this is a culture. This is a way of life. This is a commitment to freedom. This is something bigger than their own self-interest.

This is about culture, about our heritage and pride in our country. We must re-ignite that culture, rebuild that culture. Today, with our economy booming strong worldwide, our talented young men and women have many options. We understand that.

We must not just be able to appeal to them on the basis of we will give you a better quality of life. Yes, that is important. We will take care of our veterans. Yes, that is important. We will have a Secretary of Veterans Affairs in the new administration who is a strong advocate of veterans and veterans' rights. Absolutely.

But we must get underneath all of that and re-ignite and a new rebuilding and commitment in our culture to something bigger than ourselves. In the end, we can accomplish this, we will do this if we are wise enough to understand the opportunity to help shape the world and do more good for more people than the world has ever known.

If we are bold enough to provide and continue to provide leadership in the world, we cannot pull back. We cannot retreat. If for no other reason stability in the world is in our interest. It is in the vital national interest of our country at the time when the freedom house is saying over the last thirty years there is more freedom in the world today, a more emerging economies and more emerging democracies, why is that?

That is because of America's commitment to freedom and the boldness of our leadership. Now is not a time to retreat from world leadership. If for no other reason, ladies and gentlemen, if for no other reason for our children, none of us want our children to inherit a world where America is not the greatest power on earth.

And if for no other reason, the next great power, if America so chooses to recess and pull back into the dull gray mediocrity of the world, then the

next great power may not be as benevolent and judicious with their power as we have been with ours.

We need to think about that. It is the quiet heroes of our time, the veterans groups in the world, in our world, in this country, who are going to make the difference. You may have to play a bigger role than you ever have in helping educate and inform our young people what sacrifice is about, what our country is about.

You have a very important role at a time when we are losing veterans in the Congress. For example, my friend and colleague, Bob Kerry from Nebraska, is one of six Vietnam combat veterans in the United States Senate. I am proud to say Nebraska is the only state in America that has both Senators who are combat Vietnam veterans.

We lose Bob Kerry this year. We will lose people like Senator Lautenberg, the distinguished World War II veteran, and because we are losing so many veterans it is so important that the VFW and the veterans groups help fill in those gaps and help educate and inform and allow America to understand through all the efforts of Bob Dole and Tom Brokaw and so many people who have helped that our future depends absolutely on the strength of this country.

To all of you, I say again, all of you quiet heroes who have come back from your wars and your time and never ask for anything but have been proud of your service and proud of your contribution, I say as a United States Senator, as a fellow veteran, and a father, thank you and God bless you.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Senator Hagel, on behalf of the Commander-in-Chief, I want to present you with one of his medallions, and thank you so much for serving your country, and welcome home.

We will take a break. The Vice-President is on his way shortly, and I will ask for the band to give us some music.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Comrades and sisters, if I can have your attention. While we are waiting for Vice-President Gore to appear, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce the leadership of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Ladies Auxiliary on stage this morning.

We have the Commander-in-Chief's wife, Mary Smart. We have the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Gwizdak and his daughter. We have the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief James Goldsmith and his wife, Jan. Next is the Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Joe Ridgley and his wife, Judy. Dr. Curtis Bohlman, Surgeon General, and his wife Juanita.

We have the Western Conference candidate for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Ray Sisk. Next is the Judge Advocate General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Donald Watts. We have the Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Fred Vogler, and his escort.

Next is the Inspector General, John Zuba; the Chief of Staff, Arthur Koch, and his wife, Brenda. And the lovely President of the Ladies Auxiliary

to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Lorraine Frier; the Senior Vice-President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars Pat Jankowski and her husband, John; the Junior Vice-President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Diana Stout; the National Secretary-Treasurer of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Celia Davis, and her husband, Ken; the National Chaplain of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Betty Morris.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Vice-President of the United States, Al Gore, accompanied by the VFW Commander-in-Chief John W. Smart.

INTRODUCTION OF VICE-PRESIDENT AL GORE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you all very much. Welcome, Mr. Vice-President. We are truly honored this morning to have with us the Vice-President of the United States, Al Gore.

Vice-President Gore was first elected to this position in 1992, and re-elected in 1996. Earlier, he served as a Congressman from the great state of Tennessee and later as a Senator. It was while serving as a Senator that he came to the attention of Governor Bill Clinton of Arkansas, who chose Al Gore to be his presidential running mate in 1992.

Today, Vice-President Gore comes before us as the Democratic candidate for President in the upcoming presidential election.

Comrades, take a moment to hear Vice-President Gore, and thank you so much for allowing us the opportunity to meet with you during the campaign and the leadership of the VFW to share our thoughts and ideas about our men and women in military, our health-care system, and our brave young men and women in uniform today, and your pledge that you would make veterans the top priority of your administration.

Comrades, sisters and friends, please give a warm VFW welcome to the Vice-President of the United States and a veteran of service in the United States Army in Vietnam, and also a Life Member of the VFW. I present to you the Vice-President of the United States, Al Gore. (Applause)

REMARKS BY VICE-PRESIDENT AL GORE

VICE-PRESIDENT GORE: Thank you very much. Thank you so much, my friends. I want to thank Commander Smart for his generous words this morning, and I want to say it is wonderful to be here with former Commander-in-Chief Cooper T. Holt and all my fellow VFW comrades from the State of Tennessee, including the State Commander William Veazey.

Thank you so much for the wonderful warm welcome that you have extended to me. I have not had that many hugs in a long time. I appreciate it very much.

It's an honor to stand with so many of you who have served our country with great distinction, men and women who have risked everything to keep our country free.

This morning I was reminded again just how high the price of freedom can be. I had the chance and indeed the honor to meet with Ellen Blissenbach of Madison, Wisconsin. Ellen's husband, Joseph, served as a Sergeant First Class in the Second Infantry Division in the Korean War.

Fifty years ago, on Christmas Eve, when Ellen was pregnant with her first child, she received a telegram and learned that Joseph was missing in action. The Army soon determined that he had been captured on the front lines in North Korea, and had died on a death march, never receiving a proper burial. But it took Ellen more than four decades of searching and striving to learn that, in fact, he had died from wounds of war.

This morning, so many years later, I was very proud to award Joseph Blissenbach the Purple Heart for his valor in Korea five decades ago. His courage in America's forgotten war is forgotten no more.

Now, I don't pretend that my own military experience matches in any way what others here have been through. When I enlisted, I became an Army reporter in Vietnam. I didn't do the most, or run the gravest danger. But I was proud to wear my country's uniform. And my own experiences gave me strong beliefs about America's obligation to keep our national defense strong.

I have believed in strong defense, I have fought for it all my public service, not just in an election year, but every year. It is important.

I served on the House Intelligence Committee and on the Senate Armed Services Committee. As a Congressman, I took up the issue of nuclear arms control and nuclear weapons, because nothing is more fundamental than our national strength and security.

As a Senator, I supported the use of American forces to ensure freedom of the seas during the Iran-Iraq War. I broke with many in my own party and voted to support the Gulf War when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, because I believed America's vital interests were at stake.

These past eight years, as a member of the National Security Council, I have worked to reverse the decline in defense spending, and I am proud that we won the largest military pay increase in 20 years. We need to do more, but we have made some progress. And since the day I co-founded the Vietnam era veterans' caucus in Congress, I have never stopped fighting for an unshakable national commitment to our veterans.

It's that year-after-year commitment to a strong American defense that makes me so concerned when others try to run down America's military for political advantage in an election year. That's not only wrong, in fact, it's the wrong message to send our allies and adversaries across the world.

As the United States Army reported just this month, "All ten of its divisions are combat ready and able to answer the nation's call." Our Navy has more than twice as many surface ships as China, and more than three times as many as Russia. And our Air Force is by far the largest and most modern in the entire world. And if anyone doubts our strength, let them talk to our pilots patrolling the skies over Iraq right now. Let them meet the sailors who have kept the peace in the Taiwan Strait. And let them remember our over-

whelming victory in Kosovo, without a single American life lost in battle.

Our military is the strongest and the best in the entire world. If you entrust me with the Presidency, I pledge to keep it that way with whatever it takes. I say to you today: I love this country, and I will make sure our military continues to be the best trained, best equipped, best led fighting force in the entire world, bar none.

In this global age, we need an even greater resolve. In the last century, this nation more than any other freed the world from Fascism and Communism. Many of you were responsible for those victories. But a newly-free world still has dangers and challenges, both old and new. We almost always have the will to defend our ensuring interests, from Europe to the Middle East, to Africa and Asia, and even in our own hemisphere.

Incidentally, I know Commander-in-Chief Smart told me in some of your sessions you remembered the families of those Russian sailors lost in the submarine in your prayers. I think we ought to express a moment of feeling toward the Russian people for the tragedy that they have endured.

Here in our country, today, we are on the threshold of manufacturing and deploying the next generation of military weapons, weapons that are critical to meeting new needs on new fields of battle.

The next President must ensure that the new generation of weapons moves from the drawing board into the arsenals of our democracy. We have to make sure that our military personnel have the 21st Century training they require to remain the finest in the world. I am proud we finally reversed the defense cut begun in the previous administration with the same long-term increase in defense spending.

I will insist that we follow this simple rule: We must never send our servicemen and women to do what they are not equipped to do. And we must always equip them to do what we ask them to do.

Our men and women in uniform offer us no less than their lives. In return, we have to make sure their service is both rewarding and adequately rewarded. That's why I will fight for another military pay raise, and I will make sure we always provide the pay our servicemen and women deserve. I will lead the effort to improve military housing. We have a serious challenge there. And I will address another important issue as well, military families who need special help just to put food on the table.

Right now, the number of military families on food stamps is less than one-third of what it was in the previous administration. But some still need food stamps, and that is just wrong. Our armed forces should be commemorated on stamps; they shouldn't have to use them to buy groceries. So I pledge to you today, in a Gore administration, I will make sure that no member of our armed forces ever have to rely on food stamps. We will solve that problem; I guarantee it. And, of course, I will make sure we will always repay our debt to those whose service is done.

I am proud that we are now reducing waiting times in our VA health system, upgrading outdated facilities and meeting veterans' health challenges such as spinal cord injuries. We are going to vastly increase the

research to find ways of dealing with all of those medical challenges. I am proud to be up here with my buddy, Hershel Gober, who is doing a great job in the VA. We appreciate you, Hershel.

I am proud once again in our administration all honorably discharged veterans in America have access to the VA health system. I am proud that we won a major increase in veterans' health, to fund more health clinics and better health care. Now we have to ensure that all veterans treated in our VA system get the quality care they need. If I am entrusted with the Presidency, that's exactly what I will do. I will make that commitment to you. And we have to rededicate ourselves to the idea that built America's middle class in the years after World War II. The key to opportunity is education.

Those who fight for our security should never have to fight for the education they need to succeed. So I will fight for the largest increase in veterans' education since the G.I. Bill. We owe that to our veterans. In this informed age, we should make that available always.

And let me be clear about what are called veterans' benefits. We don't give our veterans anything; you earned it with blood, sweat and sacrifice.

Now, I want to make one final point to you today. We cannot have the right defense policy in the 21st Century without the right economic policy. That is why I will not go along with a huge tax cut that primarily benefits the wealthiest at the expense of everyone else, which would wreck our good economy, and make it impossible to modernize our armed forces and meet our commitments to veterans, keep our armed forces ready for battle.

It is wrong to spend our budget surpluses on short-term gain, when we need to make sure the resources are there to keep our military strong far into the future. We should pay down our national debt to keep our economy strong into the future.

I will make sure the resources are there. I will fight to see that America meets its fundamental responsibilities, to the men and women who safeguard our freedom, and to the hard-working, middle class families who make freedom worth fighting for.

I was in Chicago, and Tipper and I went along with Mayor Daly and his wife, Maggie, to a Vietnam veterans exhibit of art and poetry, and whatnot, and pictures that the returning veterans had collected. It is the first time it was all brought together in one place.

One of the guys who was responsible for creating that institution there gave me an aluminum canteen with a poem he had written engraved on the canteen. I have kept it in my office since that time. The poem says this:

Each face will lose its name,
And time will not defer,
For there will always be a bond,
Between who we are
And what we were.

I can't tell you how much your service and sacrifice mean to this country. I can't tell you how much it means to me to be a member of the VFW.

And I make you this simple pledge: If I am entrusted with the Presidency, I will always stand up for and fight for our men and women in uniform. I will never forget those who have worn the uniform, and I will never let you down. Thank you, God bless you, and God bless America.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you again, Mr. Vice-President.

Comrades, thank you all so very much for staying here. Two announcements I would like to make before we close. The business meeting will start at 8:00 o'clock a.m. tomorrow morning. The 2000-2001 Department Junior Vice Commanders and spouses will meet for a reception in the Empire Room at the Hilton Hotel at 1:00 p.m.

Sergeant-at-Arms, prepare the room for the closing ceremonies.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN VOGLER: Let's take a moment of silent prayer to pray for the Russian sailors that lost their lives in that submarine, and pray for their families also. Let's have a moment of silent prayer.

(Whereupon, the assembly stood in a moment of silent prayer, followed by the Closing Prayer from the Ritual by National Chaplain Vogler.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the closing ceremonies for today's session have been performed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, as always. We stand in recess until 8:30 a.m. tomorrow morning. Thank you, comrades and sisters.

...Whereupon, the meeting was duly
recessed at 11:45 o'clock a.m. ...

SECOND BUSINESS SESSION WEDNESDAY MORNING, AUGUST 23, 2000

(The Second Business Session of the 101st National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, was called to order in the Midwest Express Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, at 8:30 o'clock a.m., Commander-in-Chief John W. Smart, presiding.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Comrade Sergeant-at-Arms, will you please prepare the room for the Opening Ceremonies.

(Whereupon, National Sergeant-at-Arms Barry Hoffman led the Convention in the Salute to the Colors, National Chaplain Fred Vogler gave the Opening Prayer, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance by the Assembly.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Opening Ceremonies have been performed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you very much. Good morning, comrades. Our first order of business is a roll-call vote. The roll-call vote before us was in doubt the Chair's call of the voting of the acceptance of the Committee's report. The roll-call vote will be to accept the

Committee's report to adopt the Resolutions, as amended, and also to adopt Resolutions 406, 408, 409, 412, 420, 422, 423, 427, 444 and 454. We will now start the roll-call vote. First, we will get a report from the Credentials Committee.

REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMRADE RICHARD TROMBLA (Post 1174 - Kansas): Commander-in-Chief, I am Richard Trombla, Department of Kansas, Post 1174, Chairman of the Credentials Committee. This is a temporary report as of 4:00 o'clock yesterday. The total delegates strength is 12,530; Department Commanders, 45; Commanders-in-Chief, 27; National Officers, 37. That is for a grand total of 12,639. I would like to remind you that there are nine Department Commanders that have not registered and one Council member. If you will please check with the Credentials Committee and register so you will be counted.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Cont'd.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Is there any misunderstanding on the roll call that is ready to be taken? If not, we will proceed with the roll-call vote.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Do all the Commanders have their voting strength as of today? We will begin the roll-call vote.

...As Adjutant General Senk

called the roll, the following votes were cast: ...

"OFFICERS"	"YES"	"NO"
Commander-in-Chief John W. Smart	X	
Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Gwizdak	X	
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief James M. Goldsmith		X
Adjutant General John Senk	X	
Quartermaster General Joe L. Ridgley		X
Judge Advocate Donald W. Watts		X
Surgeon General Curtis O. Bohlman		
National Chaplain Fred Vogler		
National Chief of Staff Arthur Koch	X	
Inspector General John Zuba	X	

COMRADE DONALD FENTER (Post 5263 - Oklahoma): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, a point of order.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE DONALD FENTER (Post 5263 - Oklahoma): I withdraw the motion that was made here yesterday to require a roll-call vote since, in fact, we have been provided copies of the Resolutions to be changed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Comrade, the problem we have right now is that, and we appreciate that, it took ten delegates from ten var-

ious Posts, and all of you would have to agree to pull it at this time. I would need for all ten to now agree to pull this from the floor.

COMRADE DONALD FENTER (Post 5263 - Oklahoma): We have got them all.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Should I assume that it is the wishes of the adopter and the seconder to pull this from the table? Can I make that ruling?

COMRADE DONALD FENTER (Post 5263 - Oklahoma): You can make that ruling.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: I so accept. Now, what we need is to take action on the Resolutions, as amended, and the numbers that I read. What is your wishes at this time?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BILLY RAY CAMERON (Post 5631-North Carolina): I move that we adopt those Resolutions.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JACK CARNEY (Post 4643 - Florida): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Comrades, the motion before us is that we adopt the Resolutions, as amended, and those new ones that were presented. Is there any discussion? If there is no discussion, all in favor will signify by saying "aye". All those opposed. The motion so carried. We do have Resolution 465 that has been set aside. At this time we will read 465 to the delegates here.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BOB CURRIEO: Comrades, 465 was set aside yesterday for discussion, and it pertains to opposing assigning women to combat roles. I will read the "Resolved" paragraph again. It is, "BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we go on record as opposing the assigning of women in the armed forces to combat units that directly engage the enemy, such as the infantry, armor, field artillery, Special Operations Forces, helicopters, and submarines."

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Do we have anyone that is going to speak on this issue?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOEL WALKER (Post 1904 - Wisconsin): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Joel Walker, Department Commander of the Department of Wisconsin. I stand in opposition and ask this Resolution be rejected. I would like to make a motion that it be rejected.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: The motion by the Committee is to accept. What we will do, we will vote on it. You can speak against the motion.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOEL WALKER (Post 1904 - Wisconsin): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, experience has told us and has shown us in the past that there have been various groups of individuals that for one reason or another somebody has not wanted to serve or felt they were capable of serving in the United States military.

I reference the blacks, and I don't like to use the word "minorities", but

I will use the blacks in this instance. It has been proven that blacks are just as equal and capable to serve in the military as anybody else that is in the military. I don't think that anyone in this auditorium can honestly say, for example, that one shining star, who happens to be Colin Powell, is any less of an individual than anybody else that has served in the military.

We have a number of women in the military that serve in combat roles. There is no way that the military can guarantee that women in the military will not be in a combat situation. We have somebody in our midst right now, a Senior Vice Commander from Louisiana.

She served in the Gulf War. She was supposedly serving in a safe area as a medic. But she was asked to bear arms and protect her troops. I cannot see where we can ask our military personnel not to be properly trained and given the ability to protect themselves and their fellow comrades in the performance of their duties.

I have spoken with the Lieutenant Commander for the Navy, who was at the National Security meeting, a Major from the Marine Corps, and they have also stated that this is an unrealistic view of the military in today's military, and that it will not work and does not work because we already have women in combat situations.

I cannot believe that, for example, if we had a situation arise where we had a woman who was in command of a naval ship, and an instance came up and that ship was the nearest ship in the area, that we would take that woman out of her command and take those women off that ship and replace her command with a male generation or a male species just because they are a male.

They have proven themselves to be worthy of war and support of our troops and our country and our beliefs. I can't believe that we would relieve her and them from their command, or send that ship somewhere else and bring another one in. History has taught us many things, and I think that we need to learn from our past.

We need to be guided from our past, not geared by our past. We don't need to be looking at what happened thirty or forty years ago, but we need to be looking towards the future and the reality. The study that was taken regarding this particular situation, there were no men cited in any reasonable study on this Resolution.

Another point that comes to mind, that if this is the situation, that the men are more willing to go into combat than women, then why hasn't the military services filled their recruiting quotas in the last number of years? I find that to be very, very interesting. So I stand here in opposition of this Resolution, and I ask that it be defeated. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE DEBORAH WALKER (Post 1904 - Wisconsin): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I, too, stand in opposition to this Resolution based on

--

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Comrade, please state your name and Post for the record.

COMRADE DEBORAH WALKER (Post 1904 - Wisconsin): I am Deborah Walker, Post 1904, Department of Wisconsin.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you.

COMRADE DEBORAH WALKER (Post 1904 - Wisconsin): Approximately, 190,000 troops on active duty are women. Nearly 20 percent of the Reserve in the National Guard components are women. Women who were captured and held as prisoners of war have served honorably and with distinction.

Current active duty, U.S. Army helicopters have almost entirely female crews, including Medevac through combat approaches. As a congressionally chartered organization, it is our responsibility to support active duty Reserve and National Guard personnel regardless of race, creed or gender.

It is vitally important that the Resolutions of the Veterans of Foreign Wars support the current policies of the Department of Defense to support all troops at home and abroad. Those who have fought for freedom realize its value and to limit the freedom of women choosing a military career is discriminatory. Although not all males or females would choose direct combat roles, but for those that do choose Army careers, promotions, especially in higher than the first or second-term enlistments, may depend upon combat experience or training to further their careers.

Enlistees are now advised upon enlistment or job selection what positions require combat duty or mobility status. Although the list of surveys have been conducted, there have been no equivalent surveys cited taken among male mforces to determine any direct relationship or similarities.

As a premier veterans organization, we have a responsibility to recommend to Congress and the Department of Defense suggestions or Resolutions that will improve the quality of life, including career advancements, to enhance retainment of qualified, dedicated personnel regardless of gender.

It has been determined by the United States Army that ineffective leadership has more impact on the discipline, morale and cohesion of a military unit than the gender of that unit. The areas of assignments currently listed in this Resolution are presently at least partially staffed by women, such as Special Forces Communications, logistic support, helicopter crews and land-based artillery support such as Patriot missile batteries.

Families in this nation mourn the death of a military member regardless of the gender. We must continually support the combat readiness of the United States armed forces. Possible effects of this Resolution may be the limitation of the Department of Defense to effectively staff air, sea or land-based military units reducing combat readiness.

The cost of implementing this Resolution would run into the hundreds of millions of dollars taxpayers are not prepared to spend regardless of their opposition to involuntary combat assignments. Social difficulties concerning a lack of discipline are not limited to the United States military.

Although military members may be assigned non-combative roles, they must be thoroughly trained to protect themselves, their comrades and vital

military equipment if attacked. Not supporting combat assignments for women will affect now and in the future our ability in the Veterans of Foreign Wars to retain and recruit female veterans into today's gender-integrated military within this organization.

If we do not support and defend their rights to a full and satisfying military career, they will not continue to join and be active participants within our organization now or in the future.

In conclusion and with respect, my fellow comrades, the military of twenty years ago and older is not the military of today. I believe we must use the influence we currently enjoy to apply realistic and effective Resolutions or suggestions to the Department of Defense and Congress.

To approve any Resolution such as this one would diminish our ability to be an effective voice for our active duty Reserve and National Guard personnel. The military representatives attending this Committee meeting were two female and one male officer.

All agreed this Resolution does not reflect a realistic viewpoints. We must be looking to the battlefields of the future, not the past. No longer are front lines static. Our military is mobile and fast-moving to be as effective as possible, while controlling casualties as seen by the tactics of Norman Schwarzkopf in the Gulf War.

The fox holes of the past are no longer except as shelters during a missile alert which usually passes in less than an hour with today's technology. I ask you, fellow comrades, to reject the revised Resolution that was rejected in a previous submission two years ago in San Antonio.

Again, send the message, we support all veterans in their pursuit of freedom. I feel to deny any military member the opportunity to defend our great nation is not keeping the faith with our military veterans. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE JOHN LEWIS (Post 4051 - Colorado): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, my name is John Lewis. I am a Past State Commander from the Department of Colorado, Post 4051. I rise in opposition to this Resolution.

First of all, combat today is not the combat that we know from World War I or World War II, combat is where the action is, whether it be defending an embassy somewhere in the 140 places that we are deployed to around the world, or whether it is standing in the Sinai line between Israelis and the Egyptians, the Palestinians, and the Syrians, or whether it is on a road in Kosovo patrolling a post between the Serbs and the Croats. It is a whole different ball game.

It would be the mob action like we have seen in Somalia. It was where they drug out helicopter pilot through the streets. Action is where the combat is. I have a daughter that is a lieutenant colonel in the Army, and she refers to her troops as her soldiers, not as male and female.

They are all trained in their weapons and they can field strip a rifle. A

woman can field strip and clean her rifle just as fast as the men. Her shoes are just as polished. When she is standing in the formation, like the 3,000 that went to Bosnia this year, you cannot tell male from female.

I don't think they should serve aboard a submarine unless there is some other means of separation of the genders aboard the submarine. I don't believe they should be in tanks. I don't believe that they should be out there in the assault forces.

But to pass this motion saying they cannot serve in the combat area, you are going to handicap our military to the point where they won't know whether they can put this person in MOS or not. It also handicaps us when we go out there to recruit. If we cannot recruit people who have served in hostile circumstances, then we cannot live up to our Constitution and By-Laws.

I rise in opposition to this Resolution and I ask that it be defeated.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE MIKE BURRIS (Post 2615 - North Carolina): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Mike Burris, Post 2615, Department of North Carolina. I believe as in San Antonio we have heard this discussion before. I don't believe that anything that is going to be said today will make a real big difference one way or the other. We will vote the way we want to vote. Therefore, I call for the question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE GENE KENT (Post 891 - North Carolina): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Gene Kent, State Senior Vice. I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: That was a second, comrade?

COMRADE GENE KENT (Post 891 - North Carolina): Yes, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: We have the call for the vote. It has been made and seconded. All in favor for the call for the vote signify by saying "aye"; all opposed. The motion carried.

We are now voting on Resolution 465 to adopt. All in favor of adopting Resolution 465 signify by saying "aye"; all opposed "no". The "nays" have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CURRIEO: Comrades, we have a few Resolutions in the National Security Committee that were rejected. Let me go over those, and if you want those set aside, fine. Most of them were rejected in favor of other Resolutions.

We begin with Resolution 407, Time Is Running Out For Castro. This was rejected in favor of 454.

Resolution 425, Support the U.S. Army's School of the Americas. This was rejected in favor of new Resolution 443. The Army is closing down the School of the Americas and the Department of Defense is opening up a new institute to replace it.

No. 431 was Restore Pre-Attack Ranks to Admiral Husband E. Kimmel and General Walter C. Short. This was rejected because Congress has already taken that action.

Resolution 452, The Spirit of Patriotism Crusade. This was referred to

the General Resolutions Committee.

Resolution 455 was a Resolution on Universal Military Training. This was rejected because universal military training -- universal simply means is that we can take everybody in for military training and we know that there are many that are not qualified for military training. So this was also recommended for rejection.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: There is no motion to set aside. The Resolutions are rejected.

I now call to the podium for his report on POW/MIA, Past Commander-in-Chief Billy Ray Cameron.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON POW/MIA

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BILLY RAY CAMERON: Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief. First of all, let me thank you for appointing me chairman. I would like to introduce my viceTM chairman, Jack Carney. We spent a lot of time on these Resolutions.

I would like to thank also those that served on the Committee. We worked diligently to come up with good Resolutions that would support the Commander-in-Chief as he speaks out on the POW/MIA issue.

First of all, I will read the Resolutions that were approved, as written, and then I will do the Resolutions<<approved, as amended. I will ask if anyone wants to set one aside, they can stand and do so.

First of all, Resolution 403, VFW Supports Kuwait's Demand for an Accounting of its MIAs. This Resolution was approved.

Resolution 418, Assist Vietnam's Recovery of MIAs as a Sign of Good Faith.

Resolution 457, A Full Accounting for Commander Speicher.

Resolution 458, Increase Central Identification Laboratory Capability.

Resolution 466, Support Former POW Slave Labor Claims against Japanese Firms.

Now, I will go back to the Resolutions that were approved, as amended.

The first one is Resolution 401. These amendments, most of them were amended for grammar. As you know, the POW/MIA numbers change actually by the day, so it was just clarification on the numbers and grammar.

Resolution No. 401, Support Public Awareness Projects.

Resolution 402, Seek Opportunities to Resolve the Korean War POW/MIA Issue.

Resolution 421, Oppose Downsizing the Defense Department POW/Missing Personnel Office.

Resolution 433, Interment of an Unknown soldier from Vietnam.

Resolution 445, Display the POW/MIA Flag.

Resolution 450, American Flags Only for Fallen Warriors of the United States Armed Forces.

Resolution 453, Accounting and Release of POW/MIA Information.

Resolution 456, Americans who are Prisoners of War and Missing in Action.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move that we adopt these Resolutions.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JACK CARNEY (Post 4643 - Florida): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: You have heard the motion before you that we accept the Committee's report. Is there any discussion? Is there any discussion? If no discussion, all in favor of accepting the Committee's report signify by saying "aye"; opposed "no". The motion carried.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BILLY RAY CAMERON: Commander-in-Chief, we had two that were rejected. The only reason they were rejected was because there was duplication on the Resolutions. That was Resolutions 435 and 433. Once again, the only reason they were rejected was they were duplications of others. We rejected them in favor of another Resolution. So, thank you, Commander.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: If there is no question on the rejections, they are rejected.

At this time we will go to the Report of the Committee on National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual, by Past Commander-in-Chief Paul Spera.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL BYLAWS, MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF PAUL SPERA: Thank you. Comrade Commander-in-Chief and Comrades, let me first thank you for the appointment to this Committee and for the assistance of the staff members who attended the meeting and assisted us, and also for the assistance of my Co-Chairman, John Stang, from the great State of Kansas.

I will read the numbers of the amendments that were voted for approval, or recommended rather for approval by the Committee. The first one is B-1, B-2, B-3, B-6 and B-7.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I make a motion that we accept the recommendations and pass those.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: We have a motion. Do we have a second? PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN STANG (Post 3147 - Kansas): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: We have a motion and a second that is in order. Any discussion? Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DEAN WHITE (Post 27 - Department of Europe): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Dean White, Post 27, Department of Europe. I ask that B-1 and B-3 be set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: B-1 and B-3 have been set aside. Is there any further discussion, other than B-1 and B-3? All in favor of accepting the Committee's report signify by saying "aye"; all opposed. It is so car-

ried. We will now have discussion on B-1.

COMRADE DEAN WHITE (Post 27 - Department of Europe): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move that B-1 be rejected.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: My comrade, that motion is out of order. What you can do is you can debate the issue. The Committee's recommendation is to adopt, and you can talk against the motion to reject it.

COMRADE DEAN WHITE (Post 27 - Department of Europe): B-1 should be rejected based on the fact that this amendment to the by-laws is a thinly disguised attempt to pad the membership. If you use the argument that members travel between states and want to be active as they move about the United States, there is no requirement for membership other than in one Post for a person to be active in any other given Post.

The argument has been stated that personnel want to become elective officers in various Posts. That also doesn't work. If you are not at one Post for a full year, how can you serve as an elected officer? It has been argued in the presentation of this amendment that some states because of their liquor law licenses will not recognize membership outside of a given Post.

This is also an irrational argument in that the only obligation you are fulfilling is increasing the sales of your bar and not the membership of your Post. Membership does not necessarily equate to activity. If I want to be active in a Post, I can walk into any Post, support their programs without being a member of that Post. Based upon these discussions, I believe this amendment should be defeated.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359 - Texas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Glen Gardner, Jr., a delegate from Post 359, Garland, Texas. As a member of the National By-Laws Committee, I stand in favor of this proposed by-law change. In the Southern states, especially, there are a lot of good comrades who have moved to the South, first as snowbirds and now as regular residents in these Southern states.

These individuals belong to Posts in Michigan, Ohio and the Northern states, and because of the affinity they feel with these Posts, either they were a charter member or the Post may have been named after someone they knew, they feel that they don't have the freedom nor do they want to transfer their membership to where they now live.

They want to be active and they want to be a part of what goes on in the local community and at the local VFW Post, but they don't feel that since they are not a member they have that right or they have that freedom to go into these Posts and to take an active part.

Sure, there are some of them who do. Most of them don't. I have talked to many of these individuals. A personal friend of mine is a member in Arkansas because the Post is named after his dad. If he was allowed to join a Post in Austin, Texas, he would do so and he would be a good VFW member in Austin.

But because he is not allowed to join, he will not even go to a VFW Post. I think it is a good by-law amendment. I don't think that we are talk-

ing about thousands and thousands of members. I think we are talking about a few members that want to be able to be affiliated with the Post they belong to in another state, but still be affiliated with a Post where they live or where they live at least half of the year.

I think the delegates should support this by-law change as did the Committee at their Committee meeting the other day. Thank you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE RON RUSKO (Post 9460 - Connecticut): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Ron Rusko, Post 9460 in Stratford, Connecticut. Although I agree with some of what my good friend Glen Gardner said, I do rise to oppose this by-law amendment. I think if we approve this by-law amendment, we are certainly going to be opening Pandora's box.

It is said that there wouldn't be a lot of people carrying dual, triple or more memberships. But this by-law will allow anyone to join one Post in each Department of our great organization. I think we would become the laughing stock of the whole veterans' community from the very best veterans organization to one that has a membership that is totally inflated by dual membership.

Does this by-law amendment also mean that, God forbid, if someone were to belong to six or seven Posts and was in a car accident and accidentally died, that his widow or his survivor would receive \$1,500 times five? I don't think that the Insurance Department is going to be very happy about that, paying off five, six, seven, eight or nine more times for the loss of one life.

Does this mean that those of you who are in two or three or more states controlled by one Council member, the National Council member, that that man or woman can go from state to state to state and run every single time for National Council member?

Does this by-law amendment also mean that I, as a member of more than one state, would now control more than one vote? If I vote at my Department Convention in Connecticut, and then vote at my Department Convention in Rhode Island, and then vote at my Department Convention in Massachusetts, I would control three votes or more.

I think the whole tenet of our organization has always been fair, one man, one vote. I think if you look at it from that sense as well, how are we going to control this? Who is in what Post? Who does what? What if one person gets thrown out of one Post for being a bad guy, can he just go to another Post until he is thrown out of there for being a bad guy?

I think this is a very ill-advised by-law amendment. I strongly urge each and every one of you to reject it. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE GEORGE CAIN (Post 3614 - Pennsylvania): The 145,000 plus members of Pennsylvania oppose this. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE ROBERT SPRUTE (Post 5625 - Florida): I rise in total sup-

port of this Resolution. I think when we come to these conventions, as we are here today, the first thing we think about is the responsibility we have toward the membership and the members of this organization.

By allowing this to happen, we must think of those people, and in a way I am echoing Glen Gardner's remark, those people who are from the Northern states often reside full time in the Southern states and keep their membership there out of pure loyalty or for sentimental reasons.

I think we defined this to such an extent that we exclude them from the right that they have as members of this organization to become active members in the community in which they now live. We don't need to think that we are prostituting or diluting the strength of the organization by comforting these people and giving them what they richly deserve. I stand thoroughly behind this Resolution and I urge you to vote "yes".

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE EUGENE MANFREY (Post 6627 - Florida): Comrades, I would like to speak in favor of the motion. I am a prime example of what we are talking about and the reason why we should pass this particular Resolution. Many of you know that I am a former resident of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

My former Post 631, in Warren, Pennsylvania, a World War I Post, I was the first Korean veteran to join that Post. I was the third member that got a Life Membership from that particular Post, and I was honored to have that Life Membership from a World War I Post.

I had to relinquish my membership in the Commonwealth because I was transferring. My job took me to St. Petersburg, Florida. I had made a commitment to that particular Post that I would never change my membership. In order for me to become active as a participant in the State of Florida, there was a requirement that I change my membership.

I honored that membership that I had in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and I would like to speak in favor of this particular motion, as there are many of the comrades throughout the United States that have the same problem that we do. They were Life Members, they were given Life Membership, and we ought to pass this Resolution.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, comrade. Comrades, we will stop debate for a moment to introduce the next guests, please, and we will come back to this debate.

INTRODUCTION OF GENERAL JOHN H. TILELLI, JR. (RET.) FOR COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SPECIAL AWARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Comrades, it is indeed an honor for me to introduce the next gentleman, General John H. Tilelli, Jr., Retired.

The United States Organization, USO, has been a part of the American military life since 1941. From home front to battlefield and many places in between, it has brought entertainment and a host of other services to the men and women who guard America's freedom.

We are indeed fortunate to have with us today the President and Chief Executive Officer of the USO, Retired Army General John H. Tilelli.

A combat veteran like all of us here, General Tilelli recently retired from the service after a career that spanned 37 years. He received his commission upon graduation from the Pennsylvania Military Academy. He then went on to armor school and airborne school.

He served two tours in Vietnam and several tours in Germany. He has also served in staff assignments in the Pentagon, and as the Commander of the First Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, he deployed with that unit in 1990-1991, as part of Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm.

After his promotion to General on July 19, 1994, he served as the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army. Prior to his retirement, General Tilelli served as Commander-in-Chief of the United Nations Command, Republic of Korea/United States Combined Forces Command and United States Forces of Korea.

The success of the USO, just as that of the VFW, relies on the dedication of a large number of volunteers. The USO's 12,000 volunteers donate 50,000 hours of their time to serve five million service people annually.

Please welcome the man who commands that huge force of volunteers in bringing a "touch of home" to troops around the world.

Now here to receive the Commander-in-Chief's Special Award is General John H. Tilelli. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: "Commander-in-Chief's Special Award presented to General John H. Tilelli, Jr., (Ret.) in recognition of outstanding contributions to America as a citizen/soldier.

"Presented today, August 23, 2000."

REMARKS BY GENERAL JOHN TILELLI, JR.

GENERAL TILELLI: Commander-in-Chief John Smart, a good friend, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Gwizdak, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Jim Goldsmith, and Ray Sisk, thanks for being here and thanks for letting me be here. Thanks for that award.

I will tell you that from my perspective I deserve no awards. From my perspective, I accept that award for all the men and women who have served with me over my time serving this great nation. Thanks for allowing me to be here today and the opportunity to speak to a group of citizens, veterans, patriots, who have selflessly served our country. At the same time, let me thank you, the veterans, for your service to America, not only your service in the past but what you do today.

As I was thinking and trying to prepare for the few words that I would say today, I thought about the VFW. I said what is the VFW? What does the VFW mean to America? I said it means so many things, but the important thing that it means to America is you act as America's conscience; you act as America's conscience.

You think about readiness, you think about capability, caring, defense

of our nation, ensuring that we have a strong and ready defense, care of our service members, men and women, their families. You care about veterans. As I thought about it, I said you don't think about it just occasionally like some people do.

You don't think about it during a time when it is important to speak about defense. You think about it and you do something about it each and every day through your organization. And I thank you for that. I, as a veteran of this great country, appreciate that and I, as President of the USO, and who has been and still am a crusader for the quality of life of our men and women who served this nation to the next generation of VFW members, I appreciate all you do.

Let me just say a little bit about the USO, and then I am going to talk about the people that I feel the closest to, our troops. The VFW and the USO have a unique and I think a very important relationship. It is one that runs through the very veins of our organization and one that runs through the very veins of the people in that organization. It is borne of the knowledge that Americans like us have a responsibility, a responsibility to care, a responsibility to get involved, and a responsibility to those who follow us in the service of their country.

At the same time, there are many of us in this room who have felt the sting of contempt and the lack of appreciation, and we know that it is our responsibility to never let that happen again through our current day servicemen or women.

You are truly America's conscience for your service members and families today, our veterans today, and those veterans of the future, who will become part of this magnificent organization.

Let me speak of the USO and the VFW's most recent partnership together, because I think it is so important. Together we thought it was important to do something special for the veterans of the Korean War who were in Korea during the 50th commemoration.

We wanted to ensure that when they left Korea they knew, and I hope the Korean War veterans here today know, that they are not forgotten and will not be forgotten again. So we got together and in Korea we provided a salute to heroes that included as many veterans as could come, along with the leadership from the command and the leadership from the Republic of Korea, and with our current day soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines.

I can tell you that the feeling of that partnership was palatable. What I saw in the veterans that I spoke to, what I saw in the bonding between the veteran and the current day service member was more than can be described in words. The gratitude and appreciation that they both had for each other was richly deserved.

I had the great opportunity to talk to many Korean War veterans over my three and one-half years in the Republic of Korea. I can tell you the most asked question, especially those who had not been back to Korea, was it worth it? And I can tell you in my heart and in my mind I know it was worth it.

Korea is a flourishing democracy, a high-technologically, sophisticated society, a mature country of Koreans who love Americans. Why did that happen? Why did it happen? It happened because of the veterans in this room and because of the many veterans that you represent, who served and gave some of their all to fight for freedom and democracy in the Republic of Korea.

I see it every time that I do something with the USO or do something for our troops. I can tell you when the VFW sponsors an entertainment tour, such as the Dallas Cheerleaders going to Korea during a Christmas season when our troops are unappreciated, underserved, and these young women go around and perform for these troops, you will never know the level of appreciation that is extended to the USO and to the VFW.

I can tell you that we are alive and well, but we depend on organizations like you and Americans like you to carry out our mission and our programs. We deliver America to our young men and women who serve, and it is only done because of Americans like you who freely help the USO and our volunteers, our 12,000 volunteers.

We are not government funded, just like you are not government funded, and it is through donors and organizations that we do our job. When you think about the USO, all of us have different memories. All of us have different ideas. But let me ask you when you think about the USO, what I want you to think about mostly and what I want you to see in your mind's eye are images like you in uniform, in lonely and far-away places answering our nation's call.

Most of the time being in harm's way through training or harm's way due to some mission they are on, doing our nation's bidding in peace and war, just as you did. I ask you to think of these young men and women, America's sons and daughters and grandchildren, and in some cases our sons and daughters and grandchildren, think of them today as we sit here.

Where are these young men and women? They are in places that some of us can't even think about or find on the map. They are guarding the DMZ in Korea, they are keeping peace in Kosovo, they are in Croatia, they are making a difference and truly just as you were, determining whether there will be peace or war.

In a real sense, when I think about these men and women who served, they are willing to give of themselves for their country, for the United States of America. When we define heroes, selfless service to nation, selfless service to country, being willing to give of yourself is truly the definition of a hero.

That is not how much money you make each day for doing some inane task or some inane ability. When you think about us, the USO and what we provide, we become your conduit to these troops. Today it is much more than entertainment, although that is still a core competency for those troops that are in underserved areas.

It is family readiness centers, it's mobile canteens, it is helping stranded soldiers, it is providing help in family crisis. It is Thanksgiving dinners.

It is centers around the world. It is mobile canteens in Kosovo and along the DMZ, and it is for our troops, and where they are, we are.

It is that touch of home, and it is generally provided to them free in a profit motivated world. I can say to you that no other community has organizations like ours, the VFW and the USO, because we understand the selfless service of the men and women who serve.

When you think about our armed forces and wonder what makes them so capable, what makes them so capable to do our nation's bidding and to do our nation's task, we often make a serious mistake and we say because we are so highly technologically competent, our armed forces are so capable, but that is not true in my mind's eye.

When we think of what is the silver bullet that makes our forces great, the greatest armed forces in the world, America's sons and daughters, just as in the past, just as you were, it is Americans like you that served this great nation and that is the metal that has our forces so good.

I can tell you I personally have seen it in Vietnam, I have seen it in Europe, I have seen it during Desert Shield and Desert Storm. I have seen it in our troops that served in Somalia. I have seen it in Korea. And they are your legacy today, and some of you are their heroes and their bonding for today and tomorrow.

Today the service member is the silver bullet. You are the silver bullet for America and have been in everything that has made this nation great. You know what our troops are. You have met some of them here this week. First, they are the volunteers, secondly, mostly high school graduates, success oriented, dedicated to duty, drug-free and a willingness to serve anywhere, not for the great pay they are getting -- and you have heard enough about that this week -- but for country, for mission.

I can tell you that they deserve the best that this great nation can afford, and we have got to hold people together and promise to give them what they deserve. They epitomize the values of our country and of all past veterans: duty, honor, loyalty, commitment to selfless service. They are truly men and women of character and courage.

It troubles me that many Americans take our armed forces for granted. It troubles me to know that these men and women who are serving this great nation are generally underserved by Americans. They are underpaid, they are inadequately housed, and in many cases unappreciated.

They deserve more than we as Americans can give them. And as we sit here today, where are they? They are in all those places that we think of, Bosnia, Kosovo, Korea, aboard ship, in Okinawa, around the world fighting first, soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen, doing what our nation asks, meeting every challenge.

They are imbued with the same determination that you had. They honor and respect you as veterans of this great nation. I can tell you, and this is not meant to disrespect anyone, it is very difficult for me to single out the greatest generation, for I see in my mind's eye men and women who have served this country and made America great for all generations.

We all understand the history of war, but I say our veterans of World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Shield and Desert Storm, and many other places, are America's greatest generations because of their selfless service to our country. They and you served wherever the cause or conflict was, whether it was popular or not.

They served with the same spirit of those who won our nation's freedom and independence, and epitomize what is on a statue in a square in Boston that says, "Not for self but for country." It is clear to me that when we talk of Americans and America's greatest generation, it certainly includes the veterans who are here today from all wars, all conflicts, and all those that you represent so well.

As we sit at this very important meeting, where all the important people have come to you to talk, I ask that you think and visualize the many American servicemen and women serving around the world. I am convinced that without your support and the support of the American people and the care of the American people, we will lose these silver bullets, these great sons and daughters of America who are guaranteeing our freedom and the freedom of others around the world.

I can tell you I think that our relationship between the USO and the VFW will flourish. I look forward to making this relationship a more effective and a long-lasting partnership. I, as a veteran of this great country, ask for your continued support.

Again, I congratulate you for all you have done and what you continue to do for America. As one of those who has been fortunate enough to have served with, and people like you, and people like you who came back from where we fought, I think it is also important to think of our friends and partners, our buddies, the men and women whose bones and souls and spirits nurtured the Verdun forests and fields around the world, who guaranteed freedom and democracy, veterans, past and present like you, have paid the ultimate price; soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, men and women of character and courage. We should never forget that and I know you don't.

I think it is best described, and I will close very shortly with a little quote from Charles M. Province. If I may quote this, it kind of describes his thoughts, and I think it also describes my thoughts of what being a serviceman is all about.

"It is the soldier, not the reporter, who has given us freedom of the press.

"It is the soldier, not the poet, who has given us freedom of speech.

"It is the soldier, not the campus agitator, who has given us the freedom to demonstrate.

"It is the soldier, not the lawyer, who has given us the right to a fair trial.

"And it is the soldier who salutes that flag, whose coffin is draped by that flag to allow the protesters to burn that flag."

In a real sense, that describes my empathy and my love for the men and women who serve this country. Again, lastly, I thank you for all you do. God bless you all and God bless the VFW and the veterans you represent.

I ask that you take time to think about and pray for our troops around the world and around America. And God bless America. Thank you very much for allowing me to be here.

I think I am supposed to do something here. I think it is a giveaway of some sort. It is a ticket for two on Northwest Airlines anywhere in the United States that Northwest flies. The winner is W. E. Pruitt, 407 Rosenwood Road in Moncks Corner, South Carolina. Congratulations. Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF LINDA HOPE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Comrades, I am especially pleased to bring our next guest to the podium. For more than half a century, the VFW has enjoyed a great relationship with Bob Hope.

Today we are announcing the most recent development in that relationship, a float in the 2001 Tournament of Roses Parade that will salute the VFW, America's veterans and Mr. Bob Hope.

To make that announcement, please give a warm VFW welcome to an award-winning film maker and the chief operating officer of Hope Enterprises, the daughter of Bob and Delores Hope, Linda Hope.

REMARKS BY LINDA HOPE

MS. LINDA HOPE: Thank you. Thank you all very much. I tell you, it is a real thrill for me to be here today and to be able to look out and see the faces, many of whom my dad entertained for so many years. In fact, next year is going to mark 60 years that it has been since he has started entertaining all of the troops.

I can tell you from personal experience those have been 60 of the proudest and most important moments of his entire life. You know, he is 91 now and in kind of fragile health, I would say, and one of the things that brings him the greatest amount of pleasure is to be able to have someone read to him some of the letters that he has treasured -- many of them go back as far as World War II days -- and to read the letters from the men and women that wrote to him and from the parents of the men and women who didn't make it back.

It brings smiles and gives him some sadness. It brings back some memories. And I have to thank each and every one of you, and those of you who are not here but you represent those people, to thank you so much for giving him the laughter that has really, I think, kept him going for so long.

You know, it is an interesting thing. Now he has to have nurses kind of around the clock, and I was talking to one of them just the other day, and she happens to work at a hospice. I was saying to her, "You know, how do you know how long somebody has to go?" Because my dad is sleeping now a good bit of the time and all of that.

I said, "Do you have any idea?" She said, "You know, it is an interesting thing. It is not a scientific thing or anything, but we have found that

when people stop smiling, stop laughing, that it is usually maybe a day or two, and then they let go. It is one of the last things to go is that ability to smile and to enjoy life."

I have to thank you all for keeping my dad going, because every day there are many smiles and many laughs that he enjoys thinking about all of you. He is so pleased to know, as my mother is, that this float is going to happen for the Rose Bowl Parade.

He has been Grand Marshal a couple of times in that parade, and it is a beautiful thing with all the flowers and all the people. And to be tied in with the VFW, with the people that he loves and the people that he has entertained for so many years is almost as exciting to him as when he was named an honorary veteran, which he marks as the proudest moment of his life.

That happened a couple of years by an Act of Congress, and many of the people here today were helpful in making that happen. This float is just something that is, I know, going to bring another smile to his face. So thank you very, very much, and I really, from the bottom of my heart, want to tell you how much my dad treasures each and every one of you. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: If you will bear with me for one moment, we are going to try this once again today. Please direct your attention to the monitors for a specific message from the Commander of the U.S. forces in Korea, General Thomas A. Schwartz.

...Whereupon, the video message was
played at this time. ...

PRESENTATION OF VFW ARMED FORCES AWARD, GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION TO ALFRED RASCON

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Comrades, it is indeed an honor to present to you Alfred Rascon, who will receive the VFW Armed Forces Award.

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty." That is the first sentence in the citation that accompanies the award of the Congressional Medal of Honor, the highest award for valor in action against an enemy force which can be bestowed upon an individual in the armed services of the United States.

What does "above and beyond the call of duty" really mean? In the case of our next guest, Alfred Rascon, here is what "above and beyond" meant. The time was March 16, 1966, the place, South Vietnam. During an intense enemy attack, Rascon, a 20-year-old specialist serving as a medic with the Reconnaissance Platoon Headquarters Company, 503rd Airborne Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade, crawled through enemy fire to treat a wounded soldier, sustaining shrapnel injuries and a bullet wound to his hip.

After dragging the soldier out of the line of fire, Rascon went back to

retrieve needed ammunitions. This time he received serious injuries to his face and torso from an enemy grenade.

Despite his injuries, Rascon again moved forward under enemy fire to treat two more soldiers. Covering each in turn with his body, Rascon absorbed the blast from exploding grenades, thereby saving the lives of the two soldiers.

When help arrived, Rascon refused aid until all the wounded had been cared for. He was awarded the Medal of Honor on February 9, 2000, by President Clinton. He is the 38th Hispanic recipient of this prestigious award, and the last recipient of the 20th century.

Comrades, sisters and friends, please welcome Alfred Rascon, Congressional Medal of Honor recipient.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The citation reads: "National Armed Forces Award, Gold Medal and Citation awarded to Alfred V. Rascon in special recognition of his exceptional heroism and valor, when, without regard for his own life, he rescued three wounded comrades during an intense enemy attack in the Long Khanh Province of Vietnam, while serving as a medic with the 503rd Airborne Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade. This selfless act of courage earned him the Medal of Honor, the 38th awarded to a member of the Hispanic community and the last recipient of the 20th Century.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 23rd day of August, 2000. Approved by the National Council of Administration." This has been signed by John W. Smart, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Also an honorarium of \$5,000 accompanies this award.

REMARKS BY ALFRED RASCON

MR. ALFRED RASCON: First of all, I want to thank all of you. It is really a great honor to be here. The last time I had such an emotion within myself was on February 7th when I was with the members of my Reconnaissance Platoon that I had not seen in 34 years.

On February 8th, at the White House, it was a great honor to receive the Medal of Honor. But another honor now is being with all of you. That is what is important to me right now. May God bless all of you.

I was asked to make a speech, I was asked to make it short, and that I am very good at. But, first of all, I wanted to thank the VFW for everything that you do every day of your lives, your commitment to this country, your commitment to your fellow veterans, your commitment to yourself and the men and women who give of themselves every day are heroes.

We have spoken about heroes before, yet we fail to sometimes notice that those heroes that we have are those that are in front of you, that are next to you, both men and women who take care of you and take care of

others every day. An individual who gets \$65,000 a day may be famous, but it doesn't make him a hero or make her a hero.

That person who gives of himself or of herself can make sure that a veteran is taken care of, that that young man or woman goes to school every day, gets educated, and hopefully joins the military services, ends up being a hero. Those heroes are right in front of you and sometimes we don't pay attention to who they are.

Miss America has stated that sometimes we fail, not us, but other people to understand what this country is about. As a seven-year-old boy in 1952, I ended up seeing those of you who were called the forgotten war veterans who boarded ships to go to Korea. I made it an issue at that time to learn about everything I could at the age of seven about the military.

I saw people from the Navy boarding ships, I saw Paratroopers, I saw Marines, I saw Coast Guard individuals, I saw the Air Force departing for something that they had no idea what it was about. You took care of me. You gave me badges and inspired me to join the military.

Most of all, some of you inspired me to jump out of an airplane, and to this day I don't know how I did it. At the age of seven, I ended up making my own parachute and jumped off the roof. I didn't quite make it. I ended up breaking my wrist.

It made me know the fact that I liked the military and I was going to be a part of it. I ended up being an immigrant to this country and by virtue of that I owe a lot to this country. I owe it to you as individuals from World War II, who went into Normandy and in every God-forsaken island you can think of in the Pacific and also in Europe.

Those of you who were aboard the aircraft B-17, who stuck your lives out every day, those are the heroes. Those of you who are of the forgotten war, which are not forgotten in your hearts everyday, are also my heroes because you made me realize I have something to give to this country as my parents did. And that is really important.

I joined the service at the age of 17, conning my parents into signing a waiver. To this day, I do not think of anything other than duty, honor and country for what this country has given me. I have my son with me, Allen, who is nine.

I want to make sure that all of you understand and realize that what has happened over the last 50 years is not for you, it is not for me, it is not for the sake of our children to understand the fact that a war is not something that is fun and to let them know that you have given them everything that they have.

Sometimes people forget that, especially in these days, which I think is terrible. The most important thing that my son ended up giving me, which he did not want me to come back and tell you, he was a little bit afraid. He ended up helping me with my notes last night.

He wanted to thank all of the veterans for everything they have done for all of the services. He wanted to thank those especially from Korea, because his grandfather was a Marine in Korea. His other grandfather was

a paratrooper who jumped in Normandy and kept that to himself for a very long time.

This is what you people are about, men and women of the VFW. Most important, he wanted me to let you know that he thinks Operation Uplink is great and, most of all, he had a very good time with Miss America.

I presently serve as the Inspector General for Selective Service, which is a draft. In my capacity as Inspector General, I really can't come back and make an official statement about the draft, but I think that is something that is honorable and I think it is something that everybody has to do in some manner, shape or form.

You have a responsibility, not us, but our children and our young men, to do something for this country, to understand what this country is about and what it gave us. Hopefully, one of these days they will understand that and come back and take advantage of what is there before them. I ended up with a short speech that I wanted to come back and give, but most of the time I don't do that.

In closing, I want to come back and let you know what else my son told me. A week ago, we were at Fort Bragg at the opening of the Special Operations Airborne Museum. General Shelton was there. He made a very good comment that Allen came back and told in his speech.

He said, "Dad, remember what General Shelton said." He said, "First of all, Caesar was an emperor, Caesar was a great general, and Caesar gave really, really long speeches; they killed him." With that, I salute all of you and God bless you.

PRESENTATION OF THE VFW JAMES E. VAN ZANDT CITIZENSHIP AWARD, GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION TO HUNTER SCOTT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: I am indeed honored now to present the VFW James E. Van Zandt Citizenship Award. In 1998, then twelve-year-old Hunter Scott of Pensacola, Florida, saw the movie "Jaws." In the 1975 movie, the shark hunter Quint, portrayed by actor Robert Shaw, recounts his ordeal as a crew member of the USS Indianapolis, whose crew was disseminated by sharks following the sinking of their ship by a Japanese submarine. Fascinated by the movie, Scott contacted 80 of the 150 survivors as a history project.

Most of the survivors believe their skipper, Captain Charles McVay, III, was wrongly convicted of negligence in the sinking of the Indianapolis.

Scott's research captured the attention of his local Congressman, resulting in Senate Joint Resolution 25, introduced by Senator Bob Smith of New Hampshire. The resolution proposes that McVay's court-martial be overturned and the crew of the Indianapolis be awarded the Presidential Unit Citation. The Presidential Unit Citation has since been authorized under the fiscal year 2000 Defense Authorization Act.

On February 29, 2000, Scott carried his three-year crusade to the

Senate Armed Services Committee, reminding the Senators that "Today, there are only 134 of these men still alive to see this dream become a reality." Comrades, sisters and friends, will you please welcome this outstanding young American, Hunter Scott, recipient of this year's VFW James E. Van Zandt Citizenship Award. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The citation, along with a \$5,000 honorarium reads, as follows: "James E. Van Zandt Citizenship Award, Gold Medal and this Citation presented to Hunter Scott for turning a history project about the USS Indianapolis into a national movement causing a resolution to be introduced in the United States Senate, that resulted in the awarding of a Presidential Unit Citation to the crew, and could reverse an historic decision to right what many feel was an injustice against a proud Rear Admiral of the United States Navy, proving that in America, one voice, one individual can make a difference.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 23rd day of August, 2000. Approved by the National Council of Administration."

This has been signed by John W. Smart, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: There is an honorarium of \$5,000. Congratulations.

REMARKS BY HUNTER SCOTT

MR. HUNTER SCOTT: Commander-in-Chief Smart, Distinguished Veterans and Honored Guests:

Thank you for the opportunity to humbly stand in the presence of great men and women. I am in awe that I have been chosen to receive this distinguished award from the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Those who have received the James E. Van Zandt Award before me truly have achieved greatness in their lifetimes.

I know that all who have served our country in time of its greatest need when we are at war deserve this award and recognition more than I. On behalf of my generation, I thank each of you for your commitment and sacrifice to this great country.

I have come to the realization of your sacrifice in the last four years. In the summer of 1996, I saw the motion picture "Jaws" in which an actor portrayed one of the survivors of the USS Indianapolis and described in chilling detail how he and the other survivors survived for five days in shark-infested waters until they were accidentally spotted and rescued.

When that scene was over, I asked my dad if the story were true. He said it was and suggested that I research the story for a sixth-grade history fair project. I was amazed at how little information I found out about the USS Indianapolis in the history books, and even more amazed that my friends knew little about World War II or the sacrifice made by veterans such as yourselves.

I put an ad in our local Navy newspaper asking for information about

survivors of the USS Indianapolis. A call led me to a survivor, Mr. Maurice Bell, in Mobile, Alabama. In the fall of 1996, I met with Mr. Bell and heard the story firsthand. The story was as chilling as that which I had heard on "Jaws".

Mr. Bell retold how his unescorted ship was sunk, taken off the plotting board by the Navy, and how no one realized she was missing despite her non-arrival in port. Mr. Bell then gave me a list of the remaining survivors. Of the 1,196 men, only 316 survived and 154 were still alive in 1996.

Over the next year, I called or wrote every single one of those men. Over 80 responded to my request for information and filled out a questionnaire I sent them. One of the questions was whether or not they felt that Captain McVay's court-martial was justified and his conviction fair.

All of the responses I got were unanimous and most were strongly worded in outrage and anger over the court-martial of their captain. It seemed to me after doing so much, delivering the first atomic bomb to the Island of Tinian, of doing so much to help shorten the war, and after the nightmare of his ship being lost and his crew dying around him, and his own struggle for survival for four days and five nights in open sea, that somehow the court-martial of Captain McVay was not right.

Then I learned that hundreds of Navy ships were lost in combat in World War II, but none of their captains were court-martialed. I wondered why Captain McVay was the only one, and I found that others wondered, too. The three major books written about the USS Indianapolis, and virtually every television documentary all concluded that Captain McVay's treatment by the Navy was shameful.

Through my research, I was able to uncover new information surrounding the USS Indianapolis tragedy, and I sent letters to President Clinton and Secretary of the Navy, John Dalton, which resulted in very nice but stern replies stating that there was nothing that could be done and the matter was closed.

Abraham Lincoln once said, "The probability that we might fail in a struggle ought not deter us from the support of a cause that we believe to be just." I began this just cause to exonerate Captain McVay and to gain a Presidential Unit Citation for the USS Indianapolis and her crew when I was 11 years old.

What started out as a school history project has now turned into a mission, a mission to right a wrong that was inflicted 55 years ago. I know you are here today because you believe deeply in the American democracy and in the fact that you have made a difference for our country and the fact that you have made a difference through your service to this great nation.

I am no different than you as to this belief, and that is why I have journeyed to Washington, D.C., six times, personally introduced legislation on the floor of Congress, and testified before the Senate Arms Services Committee on behalf of my heroes, the men of the USS Indianapolis and their captain.

Through my journey, I have learned the great price that my freedom has

cost. I have learned that democracy and freedom are treasures so valued that men and women such as you are willing to give their lives in its pursuit. I know 880 men of the USS Indianapolis gave their lives and made that supreme sacrifice.

I pray that those who gave their lives are looking down on what I have done over the past four years with a smile just knowing that their sacrifice was not in vain. When Congress returns to session after Labor Day, conferees of the House and Senate Armed Services Committee will decide on the language of their respective defense authorization bills, which will either clear Captain McVay's name or will fail to do so.

We have gotten this far and successful conclusion to our effort is a possibility. That is why I urge your support for our cause. This four-year battle for justice has come down to one last battle, and we have not won yet. I am sure each of you has something of special meaning that reminds you of your time spent in serving our great country.

In my pocket, I carry one of my most precious possessions. That is Captain McVay's dog tag that he received when he was a cadet in the Naval Academy. It even has his thumb print on the back. I carry this as a reminder of my mission in memory of a man who ended his own life in 1968.

I carry this to remind me that only in the United States can one person, no matter their age, make a difference. I carry this to remind me of the privilege and the responsibility that I have to seek the truth and to carry forward the torch of honor passed me by veterans such as yourself and the men of the USS Indianapolis.

In 1806, Thomas Jefferson wrote, "Political interest can never be separated in a long run for moral right." Fifty-five years after the politically motivated court-martial of a man who never should have been brought to trial, we are now in the long run.

We have the opportunity to do what is morally right. I would like to ask the Veterans of Foreign Wars to help the men of the USS Indianapolis by supporting the resolution, supporting the amendment to the Defense Authorization Bill, and urging Congress to clear Captain McVay's name and the President to order the conviction expunged from his record.

This action will restore the name of Captain Charles McVay, III, which was taken from him, and it will restore honor to the USS Indianapolis while some of these men like you whom honor is everything and still alive, to see this dream become a reality.

When I began this project four years ago, there were 154 survivors still living. I must sadly report that now there are only 130. Time is running out for these proud veterans. We cannot forget the men of the USS Indianapolis for the second time in 55 years.

Again, thank you for this award and for the privilege to speak before you today. I will do my best to help my generation understand that the freedom that they enjoy today is because of your sacrifice. God bless America and all who currently do serve in the uniform under your flag. Thank you

very much. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF THE HONORABLE RONNIE SHOWS,
CONGRESSMAN FROM MISSISSIPPI

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: I am indeed honored to present to you Congressman Ronnie Shows.

Our next guest is from the great State of Mississippi. Ronnie Shows was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1998, following a long and very successful career in Mississippi State politics. He started out as the Circuit Clerk of Jefferson Davis County, went from there to the Mississippi Senate, and then was elected to the position of Southern District Transportation Commissioner, a post he held for ten years.

Today, he comes before our convention as a member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee. Please join me in welcoming a Congressman who does a lot for America's veterans, Ronnie Shows.

REMARKS BY THE HONORABLE RONNIE SHOWS

CONGRESSMAN SHOWS: Thank you. It is good to be here with you. It is really an honor. We Mississippi folks talk a little bit slower than some of you other folks, so you have to excuse me. It is great to be here with you today. It is an honor to be standing before you.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars is an association of national heroes, heroes of past wars and heroes of today's battles for the values and virtues that make our nation and our democracy the greatest. I want to thank you. I wish my dad was here today, but he is back home in Moselle, Mississippi.

The reason I wish he was here is because he is a World War II veteran. He fought at the Battle of the Bulge, and he was captured and he was a prisoner of war of the Nazis. But what he does, he reminds me of you. He represents so much of what America is about.

He embodies the courage and integrity and embodies the average American who stood up when his nation needed him. He went where he was told and he gave all he had. I want to tell you personally it is an honor for me to be here. I salute you and my dad. Thank you so much.

What I would like to do is to talk to you about a few bills that we have, and then talk to you about a broken promise that I think America has not lived up to the military retirees.

First of all, I want to talk about the Education Bill, something that helps the Montgomery G.I. Bill. It was H.R. 4334, that was introduced. Under the now present law, the stipend you receive monthly for that is \$536. So the current total benefit over the four years would be \$19,000.

Under my bill, under H.R. 4334, the monthly benefits would be increased to \$975 a month for the nine months, which would give you \$35,100. How did we get to that number? We got to that number by taking the averages of all the four-year public colleges in this country and

came out with that average.

We also have Congressman Stump's Bill 4268, which his bill passed over mine, but I supported it because it is an increase in the G.I. Bill. It goes from \$536 to \$600 a month, until October 1, 2001, and then 2002 it increases to \$720. I would like to also say that the veterans medical care budget, we increased the medical care budget by \$1.4 billion this year, which gives you \$20.7 billion in health care, which is still in conference.

The H.R. 2116 Millennium Health Care Bill and Benefits Act, which is going to help you in long-term health care, also authorizes the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make payments for emergency care on behalf of uninsured enrolled veterans and require that veterans who have received VA care within a two-year period be added for emergency medical are eligible.

Let me talk to you about a bill that was introduced, and I think is of interest to all veterans and military retirees. I call it the broken promise bill. It is something I feel in my heart. When I went to Congress, I asked to be on the Veterans Committee because of my dad.

Some of the problems I have seen in the veterans hospitals and military hospitals are the cutbacks that are actually happening. I want to do something about it. Also I want to do something about the injustice that is going on in America today toward our military retirees.

We have a bill called the Shows-Norwood Bill. I am a Democrat, a blue dog Democrat. Charles Norwood is a Republican. It is a bipartisan bill we have introduced to help our military retirees receive the promises that they were told they would have in health care for the rest of your life.

How many of you were told when you enlisted and stayed for twenty years you would have health care for the rest of your life? Raise your hands. You were promised that. Have we lived up to that promise? No. I tell you, it makes me sick, to just briefly tell you how I really feel about it. It is a promise I don't know how we cannot keep.

Everybody talks about how great our country is doing, how much budget surplus we have got. You have candidates up here telling you. But have they tried to fix this problem? No. Do they talk about it? No.

Let me tell you what 3573 does. Let me tell you, first of all, it is in the House. It has been introduced and we have 305 co-sponsors on this bill, and we cannot get the leadership to take it up. All it does is fulfill a broken promise.

It says that if you right now under current law, as you know, once you retire you reach 65, you are put on Medicare. That was not the promise. Under 3573, you will have the option of keeping CHAMPUS or Tri-Care, which neither one of them is very good. But you can keep it if you want it, and that is true, or you can get the same insurance I have got or any federal employee.

You would have to pay the small monthly payment, but you have an insurance that will be accepted all over the country. It fulfills a broken promise. If you enlisted prior to 1957, you wouldn't even have to pay that. To put it in perspective, and when I am talking to groups, I will tell you, I

talk about this bill every time I talk to a Rotary Club or a Lion's Club, and there is not a person there that doesn't agree that this country ought to live up to its commitments to its military retirees.

Let's put it in perspective. Men and women who served this country for 20 years, when you hit 65, they put you on Medicare. An elected official of the federal government like myself, or a federal employee who stays for 20 years, guess what happens for the rest of our lives? We keep health care. That is not right. That is an injustice.

My commitment to you as the guy from Mississippi, Sonny Montgomery's state, good old Southern, great American, my commitment to you is that the leadership, whether it is Democrat or Republican, in this next coming election year after January, we are going to file a discharge petition if it is not put in the budget.

CBO says this will cost \$9 billion. That is not true. A lot of the military retirees would not take all of the benefits. We think it would be more like \$4 million, which is not a lot of money. They are talking about \$2 trillion or \$3 trillion budget surplus over the next ten years, and they have been telling you for 20 years if we get the money we are going to fix your health care. They are not doing it.

When is the time to do it? Are we going to wait until we run out of money and go try and figure out another way to do it, and promise you another 20 years if we get the money we are going to fix it? That is not right.

If by February and March, they have not put it in the budget, I will file a discharge petition on the House floor and we are going to introduce this on the House floor, and you men and women out there, the reason we have got 305 co-sponsors today is because you have been calling your House members and saying why aren't you on this bill? That is the reason we have got 305.

You don't have 200,000 lobbyists walking the halls of justice for you. No one has fought your fight for you before and your fight again. That is the reason we have got 305 co-sponsors. If they don't put it in the budget, we are going to file that discharge petition and you start calling your House members and ask why they are not on that discharge? I can assure you that bill will pass, because there is only 435 and we have already gotten 305 on the bill. Help us to help you.

I am going to tell you, and I am going to close because I know you have got other speakers, I went to a hearing. Joe Scarborough had a hearing in Pensacola on this Bill 3573. Joe is a great guy. When we were there and we were hearing testimony from a Rear Admiral, I forget his name, and he said 3573 would be dangerous to national security.

I am sitting there, and I am not very smart, but I am sitting there trying to figure out how can a health care for the military retirees hurt national security? He said, "Well, basically, if you offer this program you will have so many of the military retirees leave CHAMPUS, Tri-Care and go to the Federal Employees Benefit Plan that it is going to make it hard for our doctors and nurses to have somebody to -- he didn't know what to say, and I

said, "To practice on or guinea pigs?"

But that was his excuse, that we will not have enough men and women in our health-care system, which a bunch of you don't go there anyway, we will not have enough of you to practice on. That is what is going to hurt national security.

Well, if that is all the excuse he has got, he doesn't have much of one. Let me say this. I am proud to be here with you today. I am glad that we live in a country that allows us to have these kind of meetings, and I am proud to be an American. God bless you and we love you. Thank you for letting me be here to participate with you-all today. I appreciate it.

PRESENTATION OF VFW DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL
AND CITATION
TO PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF THOMAS A. POULIOT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: I am indeed honored to introduce our next guest.

His theme was "Veteran Volunteers," and he led our organization through its 100th Anniversary and pointed the way toward our second century of service. His theme caught the essence of the VFW, volunteers helping one another. From that handful of veterans in 1899, who founded the VFW, to the millions who have served since, volunteerism has been the bedrock on which we have built our organization.

Thomas A. Pouliot, of Helena, Montana, was the VFW Commander-in-Chief for the 1998-1999 year, and what a year that was. A year in which we celebrated 100 years of success and set the course for the next 100 years. Tom Pouliot was the man for the job, and today we would like to recognize his service, not only during the centennial year, but for all the years he has served his fellow veterans and their families.

Here to receive the VFW Distinguished Service Medal and Citation, Past Commander-in-Chief Thomas A. Pouliot, "Mr. Veteran Volunteer." (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: "Distinguished Service Medal and this Citation awarded to Thomas A. Pouliot, Commander-in-Chief, 1998-99, in sincere appreciation and special recognition of his total dedication and commitment to the highest ideals of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and his continuing efforts in support of its programs and purposes. Through his exceptional leadership during the 1998-99 administrative year, the Veterans of Foreign Wars heightened their dedication as 'Veterans Volunteers' in service to our nation and its veterans.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 23rd day of August, 2000." This has been signed by John W. Smart, Commander-in-TMChief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

REMARKS BY PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief, for this most prestigious award. This award marks the culmination of my three-year service as one of your line officers. During those three years, I had the privilege of traveling to many of your Posts and a privilege of getting to meet many of you and the ladies in your Auxiliaries. It was an enjoyable experience and I enjoyed every minute of it.

I want to thank each of you now for your hospitality, your courtesies, but mostly for your friendship. During my travels, you made me feel right at home. I appreciate that. I am proud of each of you and what each of you continue to do on a daily basis for our veterans and for the VFW.

Your communities are better off because of your presence and because of your work. Keep up your good work. I intend to keep working, too. You are looking now at one of the VFW new Post officers. I am the Post Commander now of my home Post in Helena, Montana.

I intend to get the white cap this year and be up on the stage next year to receive an award. Mostly, I intend to keep working. I will always remember this day, this award, and you, my fellow veterans and comrades, I thank you. God bless you for continuing to care for our veterans. Thank you, comrades.

I would like to introduce my wife, Shirley.

MRS. SHIRLEY POULIOT: I know you all know me and I want to thank you for taking care of Tom in his travels last year. By the way, I am the President of my Auxiliary, so we are going through it all again. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF
BRIGADIER GENERAL WILMA L. VAUGHT, USAF (RET.),
PRESIDENT OF WOMEN IN MILITARY SERVICE
FOR AMERICA MEMORIAL FOUNDATION, INC.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: In 1986, Congress authorized the construction of a Memorial in Washington, D.C., that would be a lasting tribute to the women who have served and sacrificed in our nation's armed forces, from the Revolutionary War to the present.

The driving force behind this magnificent memorial was a woman with vision, determination and follow through, the qualities of a great leader and a beneficial instrument to our society.

She is Retired Brigadier General Wilma L. Vaught, United States Air Force. The contribution of women to national security throughout our nation's history has and continues to be of great value and deserve the recognition which General Vaught has strived for, for so many years.

Please join me in a very warm welcome for a fellow VFW member and the President of the Women's Memorial, Brigadier General Wilma Vaught.

REMARKS - BRIGADIER GENERAL WILMA VAUGHT

BRIGADIER GENERAL VAUGHT: Thank you very much, fellow comrades and fellow officials here at the table. It has been indeed an honor for me to be involved with this project because it has brought recognition to so many people that had been denied that recognition for so long.

We have a specialist from the Army who came and visited the memorial, and at the conclusion of his visit in our visitor's book he wrote these words: "Here in the most fitting of places they are remembered, the daughters of adversity, sisters of battle and mothers of compassion, in honor and duty they served and with diligence they are remembered. The sacrifice and hard work of these soldiers can never be overlooked. They are here revered. Let silence be reflection, reflection contemplation, and from contemplation may come thankfulness."

That is why I am here today. I am here to say thank you to the VFW and to the VFW Auxiliary as well. You have helped build this building and you have continued helping us because we are going to need help through the years to come as we keep the education center open and operational.

As of about yesterday afternoon, we had recorded \$152,017 in donations from the VFW. I thank you for every one of those dollars. The VFW Auxiliary still continues ahead of you at \$156,004, but you have narrowed the gap. That is for a total donation from the VFW community of over \$300,000. I also thank you for being a part of our advanced ceremonies and I hope you will continue to do that.

I want to give you a quick update on our activities. We have paid off all of our construction debt except \$100,000, which I withheld until some things get fixed. Our attendance has been good. This year we expect over 170,000 visitors and that will be a record for us for the three years we have been opened.

For those of you who have visited it, I thank you for coming. For those of you who have not visited, I hope you will come soon. As we think about what we are trying to do, we are trying to recognize all women who have served in the armed forces, past, present and future, and to do that we register them.

So if you know of members of your Post or people in your community, women who have served in the armed services or who are serving today, or who served in the Red Cross overseas in times of war in support of the military, please talk to that person about being registered.

We have registration forms down at our booth, No. 405. Pick one up and take it back with you. The memorial is increasingly becoming a place for ceremonies, retirement, re-enlistment and even memorial services and promotion ceremonies. In June, we opened the Korean War Exhibit, and we are very proud to have honored the Korean War nurses and other members who served during that period of time.

We are documenting the experiences of women and their stories of service, sacrifice and achievement by doing oral history now. Time is running out for many of them who served in World War II. We have got to increase that. We are holding health seminars at the memorial and doing a variety

of things to educate the children and women who have health problems as well.

We hold a series there at the memorial for children, kindergarten through twelfth year. And we also have educational kits which your Post can request. We put those together and send them out in March. We will be glad for you to get those. You call our 1-800-I-SALUTE and get those.

We are still busy scanning pictures in, entering data and, of course, working to spread the word because every day, even here, I have had women come up and they have never heard of the memorial that is built in their honor. They have never heard of it, ever.

I would be remiss if I didn't say a word about the women. For those of you who happened to be at the dedication or who saw it on TV, you may remember that we had a 101-year-old Navy yeoman who served in World War I who spoke. She said these words: "In my 101 years of living, I have observed many wonderful achievements, but none as important or as meaningful as the progress of women in taking their rightful place in society. When I served in the Navy, women were not even allowed to vote. Now women occupy important leadership positions, not only in the military but also in business, government, education, and in almost every form of human activity."

I know Freda Hardin would be proud that many women within the VFW are now rising to leadership positions. Then she said to those young women who are now in military service, "I say go for it. To those young women who may be thinking of a career in the military service, I say go for it."

That sort of became the cry of the dedication "Go For It." Well, I have to report to you that about a week or so ago Freda Hardin died. Her ashes will be placed at the National Arlington Cemetery the 8th of September, a proud woman veteran.

Another woman who visited the memorial said, "I love my memorial. Thank you for giving me an opportunity to be recognized and to be seen in history for my children and grandchildren to see forever. I immigrated to this country in 1960 and have faithfully served in the U.S. Air Force. I love those words, I love my memorial."

It is truly a memorial for each individual. For those of you who served in World War II and have your war stories, I just want you to know what a young granddaughter said. "I am so proud that there is a memorial here for my grandma who won World War II single handedly." So, I don't know what the rest of you were doing, but I now know who won the war. Thank you very much. When you make your donations, remember us. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: I want to thank you so much for what you have done for our fellow comrades and our women veterans. We are very proud of you.

We will now go back to do some debating. We have B-1.

Microphone No. 2.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL BY-LAWS,
MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL (Cont'd.)

COMRADE JIM CARLYLE (Post 10097 - Florida): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Jim Carlyle, a member of Post 10097, a delegate from that Post. I want to stress something that has not yet been stressed in favor of this Resolution, and that is in my own particular Post we have 2,000 members.

We made All-American fifteen consecutive years, and when we started making All-American we only had 200 members. I can guarantee you I know of no person in my Post that was born and raised in Florida where our Post is. Every person that I know of in our 2,000 members came from another state.

About 25 percent of these 2,000 members were new or reinstates. At least 75 percent of these 2,000 members was transferred from other states. These states lost their members to us, and if there was a dual membership, as this Resolution indicates, they would not have lost their members.

Their members would have been members there and in our Post. So as most of the people that have been talking for this Resolution seems to be from the South, where the members are coming to, the Departments in the northern part of the country should take that into consideration of how many members they are losing to us and quit losing their members and allow this Resolution to pass. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE KENNETH PIKE (Post 4876 - Oklahoma): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Kenneth Pike, Post 4876, Department of Oklahoma. I think we have heard everybody debate what is going on. I call for the question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: I have a motion calling for the question. Do I have a second?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE DEARBORN MICHAELS (Post 5985 - California): I second it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: We have a call for the question. It is in order. The motion before us will be the call of the question. All in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed. The chair calls for continuing debate.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE JACK VRTZAK (Post 1612 - Illinois): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Jack Vrtzak, Post 1612, from the great Department of Illinois. Comrades, we all sat here and just listened to a young American give us an inspiring speech, believing in what he believed is the democracy to go forth for what you think is right. It certainly moved me, I will tell you that.

I think he got a great ovation. Therefore, I look at this as a point to bring

out to us. This young man in his plight for what he believes, believed that casting one vote for one person was the democratic way of living in our nation. Therefore, how can we leave this young American, as well as ourselves, with the impression that we who put our lives in harm's way, defending democratic beliefs, now intent to prostitute our great organization by adopting a by-law which violates the one vote for one person?

As previously stated at this convention, this would only affect a few people. It would not affect the organization itself. So, therefore, why should we be making a change just for a few? Therefore, I urge you to reject this by-law change. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE FRANK LOPES (Post 92 - Pennsylvania): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Frank Lopes from Post 92, the Department of Pennsylvania. Comrades, after working on the recruiting of members for many years, one of the most effective tools that I have found is when I can tell that potential member your card will admit you to any VFW at any location.

I understand this situation that the Past State Commander Manfrey said. However, for a Resolution like this to be put into effect, the guidelines on how it is going to be administered should be available. Those guidelines should include that it would be a voluntary procedure and prohibited from becoming a mandatory requirement to go into another state. Thank you, Commander.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE ALLEN JONES (Post 21 - Pennsylvania): Commander-in-Chief, Al Jones, National Council member, and a member of the By-Laws Committee speaking against. Comrade Commander, first of all, I want to assure you as of this morning all of your Council members are now registered delegates to this Convention because I registered this morning.

I have three issues that I would like to speak on. The first one is if this passes, you are asking me to circumvent the by-laws, if it passes. By being a snowbird and going to that state, now, all I need to do is to drop the "Q" out of my name and join in that snowbird state as Allen Jones, using my address wherever I am.

That would happen, comrades. There are Posts in the United States that do not recognize a VFW card. Not being a drinking man, those that go South most of the time want to visit a VFW Post for the social part of it, not to vote in that Post.

The third thing is I hate to ask you Posts to raise your hands in your own locality where there are businessmen. We have insurance men, we have beer men, we have lawyers that want to be involved in the business of our organization. They belong to two and three VFW Posts.

So what I am trying to say, maybe you ought to clean your own house and not worry about what the snowbirds are going to do when they go South. That happens, comrades. I dare say that there would be a lot of hands up in this hall if they would do that.

Again, as I said, these people are not looking to vote in one, two, three, four Posts. As one of those states, and I don't mention states, mentioned that some of them move South and lived permanently. Well, there is such a thing in life as loyalty and sometimes I like to be loyal to my home Post.

And if I was a chartered member of that Post, and I moved South, I would like to remain a Life Member in my home Post wherever I come from. And, as I said, it has been going on. Let them join another Post. It is not hurting anything. They don't want to vote in that Post.

They are simply trying to say to those Posts in the South we want to come in and every time we come in for a bartender to say where is your membership card? I urge you to defeat this by-law change.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE EUGENE GEORGE (Post 9969 - Oklahoma): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Gene George, Tenth District Council member and a registered delegate of Del City, Oklahoma, Post 9969. After all of the debate, I know none of you are looking at it from the standpoint of the Internal Revenue Service.

You know how much trouble you are having on the East Coast anyway with whether you are a member or whether you are not. How would someone be registered with a second Post? Are you going to put him down as MIA, a member in absentia, so the National Organization doesn't double count the strength, or are you just going to be just sitting there out in the tall timber hoping that maybe they will and maybe they won't. And another state is going to say, "Oh, boy, I get me another member."

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I think they ought to disapprove this Resolution. I am sorry, Florida, but you can come to Oklahoma and use your card any time you want to.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE MIKE WYSONG (Post 9503 - New Jersey): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I rise in opposition to this by-law change. I have a deep concern that it will dilute and diminish our effectiveness in the legislative arena on Capitol Hill. I believe, and let there be no mistake, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars will come to be known as an organization of dual membership and their credibility in the membership area, when you testify before the Joint Session in Congress and we go to the Hill and lobby for the issues that we stand for, will be laughed at.

We will not have the credibility or the influence that we have had in the past, because they will not be able to trust the numbers that we represent. That is one of the first sentences that you state and I state is how many people we represent. I urge this delegation to reject this by-law change. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 2.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN MOON (Post 2873 - Ohio): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, John Moon, a delegate from Post 2873, Grover Hill, Ohio. I, too, stand in opposition to this proposed by-law change. So many times before we have heard the fact that dual member-

ship is not in the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars as seen in other organizations throughout this country.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars stands tall and has stood proud over the past 100 years as being unique in its own. We do not have to join the ranks of the other organizations. We, ourselves, can fight for the rights of our membership in our own way.

We don't have to worry about going out and seeking memberships as a result of two roles or in two states, or by that means. I have family in Florida. I can go down and visit them and seek out membership in Florida. I have some family in Kentucky and I could go and be a member in that state also for part of the time.

I have some family right next door in Indiana, and could go over there and join at a nearby Post. I have family up in Michigan. So that would be four states that I could join. I could also stay at my own Post in Ohio. I could be counted in five Posts.

I choose to belong to Post 2873 in Grover Hill, Ohio, and I am honored to do so, and would love to visit these other Posts. I think that one vote, as the gentleman from Illinois said, is proper and should stay that way. So, I stand in opposition to this by-law change. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE FRANK LAMSON (Post 97 - Hawaii): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Frank Lamson, Post 97, State Commander from the great State of Hawaii. I stand in opposition to this. This would benefit my Post tremendously to have dual membership for the people who are in Hawaii all the time.

I think this would create a logistical nightmare for our Quartermaster and for the National Quartermaster. How would you handle dual membership of Life Memberships in two different Posts and two different states? How are you going to give those rebates back?

I apologize for my voice, because my voice has been very bad all week. I do oppose this, and I believe in the one vote, just like everybody says, and that is basically what I have to say on this. Thank you. I do think we should oppose this in that way.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE GEORGE CAIN (Post 3614 - Pennsylvania): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, George Cain, Post 3614.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: I understand this is the second time you have spoken on this issue. I have to go to someone who has not spoken on this issue.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE MIKE BURRIS (Post 2615 - North Carolina): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Mike Burris, Post 2615, North Carolina. We say we learn something new every day. I learned something new on this by-laws amendment. I always thought you could only belong to one Post, period.

That is no matter what state you went to, you couldn't have a vote if you

chose to keep it in your home state. But the reason I am up here, I have a perfect record so far calling for the question and it being passed, so I move again, Commander-in-Chief. I call for the question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: I have a motion to call for the question.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE DOYLE SOUDERS (Post 2807 - Oregon): I second the motion. I am Doyle Souders, Post 2807, Oregon.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: I have a second. The question before you is to call for the motion. All in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed. The motion is carried.

We will now vote on the adoption of B-1. If you are in favor of supporting this by-law change, you will say "yes", and if not, answer the same way. B-1, all in favor of adopting B-1 say "aye"; those opposed. It is defeated.

We will now debate B-3. I call on Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DEAN WHITE (Post 27 - Department of Europe): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Dean White, Post 27, Department of Europe. I stand in opposition to this by-laws recommendation. We do not need a men's auxiliary. We have an auxiliary that already exists.

What we need to do is to change the Ladies Auxiliary to an auxiliary that welcomes all spouses and male members regardless of gender. It has been thirty years since women were admitted to the VFW. It is time we stood up and recognized the spouses and male family members of these women to be fully enfranchised members of the Auxiliary.

They should be able to join without restrictions, which this by-law amendment puts on the men's auxiliary. This amendment also requires a citizenship requirement which we eliminated from the Ladies Auxiliary five years ago. This would create an inconsistency within the by-laws. This proposal is flawed and only partially answers the problem and, therefore, should be rejected. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 3.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GUNNER KENT (Post 9972 - Arizona): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Gunner Kent, Post 9972, Sierra Vista, Arizona. I rise to stand in opposition to this Resolution. Comrades, I don't understand why we feel we have to have a men's auxiliary.

All we are looking at here is making social members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. We are looking for our bar business instead of our Post business. That is exactly what we are looking for. All of our Commanders-in-Chief, our Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief and our Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief have said over and over and over again the membership is important, not the canteen.

If we accept this Resolution, we are taking in members in a men's auxiliary that do not have the right through service to this country to join the VFW. To me, comrades, that is a slap in the face to every combat veteran that has got his eligibility through his service to the United States of

America. I strongly recommend rejection of this Resolution.

Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE JIM DORAN (Post 4600 - Illinois): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Jim Doran, Senior Vice Commander and a delegate from Post 4600, Department of Illinois. Sir, do we need a men's auxiliary? We have a women's auxiliary. The auxiliary by-laws should be amended to delete gender or other language.

They could grow their membership by allowing all spouses, surviving spouses, parents, grandparents, children and siblings of our membership to join the auxiliary regardless of sex. I was told this morning by a number of members of this body that the Ladies Auxiliary is against men in the auxiliary because they are afraid the men will move into positions of leadership.

We have females in the VFW who are in positions of leadership and they are a benefit to this organization. Sir, I feel we should oppose this by-laws amendment and allow the women or have the women take our male auxiliary qualified people into their organization. Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE AL SPENCER (Post 10813 - South Carolina): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I would like to address the three sections, 130I, 1303 and 3-B. These sections may prove to be the lifeline of success or failure of many Posts in the future. The Ladies Auxiliary has no provisions for the admission of a family's male dependents or parents, and understandably so.

Adoption of this amendment would permit an equivalency of auxiliary membership for all family members. I can only surmise what may have been in the minds of those who drafted the amendment for the Ladies Auxiliary. If I am correct, then we all can understand why at that time the men's auxiliary would not have been necessary.

Now that there is an all-volunteer uniform services, we must adjust accordingly. The one main item that could cause conflict in some families where the wife may have been an active member while her husband must be content as a guest with no association to the VFW or an auxiliary.

To give one example, which prevails today at my Post is such a case. The eligible member is a female D-3 member at this time who became eligible through Southwest Asia and Bosnia. Her husband has served in the military service, but nowhere which would qualify him for membership in the VFW.

In addition, they have two young children. Both she and her husband love sports and would make outstanding coaches for basketball or softball in our community service activities program. However, their interest in the VFW has been diminished by the fact that he is not currently eligible for an auxiliary and peace must be maintained within their family.

The men's auxiliary offers a more in-depth tool to stimulate the kind of true patriotism it strives to instill in all Americans. It will allow those Posts who elect to have a men's auxiliary to give a greater number of younger people access to directly promote all of its programs.

Sports programs, which I address, is a universal communications language understood globally, is an area I see as weak in the VFW. I support this amendment as the Department of South Carolina also voted it in, should it be approved on this convention floor.

I would like to offer one other comment, that in accepting the men's auxiliary that we in the VFW provide an Oversight Committee, especially while it would be in its embryo stage. Thank you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, comrade.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE MIKE NUCKOLLS (Post 3543 - Arkansas): Commander-in-Chief and comrades, I rise in support of this amendment. I would like to make a few points. I have three sons. Under the present situation they are not eligible to join the auxiliary or to support our programs.

I don't think that is right. I think that they should be able to honor their father by being a member of our organization, help support our programs, work for the Poppy drive and work for the Voice of Democracy and the rest of our great programs.

It is not right that my mother can come as a member of our Auxiliary, but my father has to come in as a guest. It is not right that many of you comrades that have daughters, your daughters can be members of the Auxiliary but my sons cannot. This is prejudicing and I support the amendment. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE PATRICK LOVE (Post 8203 - Florida): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I stand in support of this Resolution. We all have to understand there was great change that comes around and affects everybody. You think about the short-term effect and you think about the long-term effect.

Well, this is one of those long-term effects that will impact this organization. I have six children. Four of them are boys. They have sat in the kitchen, they have worked bingo with me on the side in the kitchen, and they have come out here and helped me in many things when I am here.

If I am away, out doing stuff, they can't go to the Post and work. They can't do it. We need our children. When I first joined this organization back in the '70s, it was a family organization and I was welcomed in and the family was welcomed in. I think we should take it back to that family organization.

The second part of it is our women in the service, also as spoken before, and I would like to reiterate it, is very, very important. We have the wives come in and what is the husband supposed to do? We don't let the women go out anywhere by themselves without us. Why can't the men attend their own? Thank you very much, Commander.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE MIKE BURRIS (Post 2615 - North Carolina): I am going to use a quote from our Senior Vice Commander John Gwizdak. I am not

going to be run over by this eighteen-wheeler, so I rise in opposition to this amendment. The main point I want to make is that our eligibility, which makes us special, unique and different, should not be compromised. For the first time in several years, unless I have missed it, I did not see a Resolution to allow the Merchant Marines eligible to this organization. So before we create a men's auxiliary, let's introduce a Resolution to allow the Merchant Marines. I stand opposed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE TOM KEYES (Post 6471 - Vermont): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Tom Keyes --

COMRADE ALLEN JONES (Post 21 - Pennsylvania): A point of personal privilege, Comrade Commander-in-Chief. I would ask you to ask anybody that is not a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars at this time to leave the hall.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: We did not hear that up here.

COMRADE ALLEN JONES (Post 21 - Pennsylvania): I ask, Comrade Commander-in-Chief, for you to request those that are not members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and delegates to this convention to leave the hall while we debate this issue.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: All members that are not members of the VFW, I ask you now to please leave the hall.

COMRADE ALLEN JONES (Post 21 - Pennsylvania): Thank you, Commander.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: You are welcome.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE TOM KEYES (Post 6471 - Vermont): Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. I am the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief from the State of Vermont. This is the third time I have been on this floor. Now, 101 years ago we started the Veterans of Foreign Wars, a little over 85 years ago the ladies started the Auxiliary.

Since that time we have been discriminating against our male members of the family. This past year you started a program trying to consolidate the men and the ladies. I say we do not stop it now. Our fathers, our brothers, our sons are entitled to the same privileges as our mothers, our sisters and our daughters. We have some folks in our families that are disabled and can never join the military. Some of you folks out there have got brothers that were never able to join the military during the time of war. Some of us have members that are in service now who have never been put in that harm's way and never left the states for whatever reasons the government gave them.

I am in favor of this Resolution and I say we vote it in. Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE EUGENE GEORGE (Post 9969 - Arkansas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Gene George, District 10 Council member and a delegate from Del City Post 9969. You have got your Parliamentarian up there,

I see, and as smart as he is I know he can answer two questions for me. Number one, in your first paragraph it says, "A Post, if the by-laws of the Department having jurisdiction so provide." I don't notice anywhere in any of these Resolutions, any of these by-law changes where the National Organization has authorized the Departments to do anything along those lines.

In the first place, since by-laws of the Posts or by-laws of the States are normally only changed during their state convention, I am sure that no auxiliary, men's auxiliary, will be authorized not until next year.

Am I wrong or right on that, Mr. Parliamentarian?

PARLIAMENTARIAN BURNHAM: The issue before us is the adoption of the amendment. We can't make any changes in the language that has been mailed out to the Posts. So as Parliamentarian, all I can say is we are acting on this amendment as it has been presented today.

COMRADE GENE GEORGE (Post 9969 - Oklahoma) Secondly, it says they have to go for authorization under 501 (c)(19) within two months of their charter and they have a year to get it. If they can get the 501(c)(19) out of the IRS within a one-year period of time. More power to them. I can tell you how you don't have to go through the IRS.

All you have to do, states, when your State Quartermaster gets that total listing from the IRS in January, you add them to it and go on down the line because the IRS will buy it. You can do it with the Ladies Auxiliary, too. I still believe that you are in trouble because the states don't authorize these until they change their by-laws. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER, JR. (Post 3859 - Texas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I rise in opposition to this proposed by-law change. I first agree with my good comrade from Oklahoma that we are creating something that we don't realize the problems that it is going to make for us, not only the IRS, but the ABC in each and every state.

I stood on this floor like many of these delegates, and heard year after year resolutions brought forth by my good friends from Connecticut, asking that we expand our eligibility requirements to bring more members into the organization. It is always defeated.

We want this organization to stay an organization of combat veterans. I know there are some that would say you should not join if we have not killed somebody. Now, we are talking about organizing a men's auxiliary to bring in non-veterans into the VFW Posts.

Comrades, whether you believe it or not, and I know those that will talk behind me will say it is not true, it will take about four or five years until these auxiliaries will be running most of our VFW Posts, non-members running this organization. That is not what we need.

I have heard them say we have discriminated against the male members of our families. Let me tell you what, comrades. Mothers and wives sacrificed a hell of a lot more than my brothers did when I went to Vietnam. Many brothers could have gone to Vietnam and many brothers could have

joined the service. They chose not to.

I chose to join and serve this country. I think this is a bad precedent for us to establish this men's auxiliary and to bring non-veterans into our organization and let them have the opportunity to drink at our canteens and to work in our Posts. I have heard that we need more help. If we need more help, then why don't we go up and sign up more of these eligible veterans?

We don't have ten percent of the eligible veterans in this organization. Let's bring veterans in and let them work for our organization. I urge the comrades to vote no on changing our by-laws to form a men's auxiliary.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 2.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF PAUL SPERA (Post 144 - Massachusetts): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I rise in support of this by-law change, and I believe that we need to concentrate on what this by-law is saying. First, in order for this by-law to take effect in your Department, your Department has to pass a by-law change on your floor. It is not automatic. If you don't want this in your Department, you won't have it in your Department.

Number two, this is an auxiliary and I find it insulting for the ladies of our organization, when someone comes to the microphone and complains that an auxiliary is going to bring in non-veterans into our organization. We have a Ladies Auxiliary composed of non-veterans who have been an asset to us.

I find it an insult to individuals that come to the microphone and cast aspersions on those of us who support this by-law change by saying that we only want it so that we can have more people drinking at the canteen. We have more and more members of our organization every year who are females.

We are denying their husbands the opportunity to participate in the Post and the Post activities at least in an auxiliary form. That's wrong. I have two sons. Neither one of them, and I thank God for it every single day, neither one of my sons is eligible for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I am grateful for that.

I wish no one else's sons and daughters would ever be eligible for our organization. But they were brought up in the VFW. They are proud of our organization and they would be very proud to be a part of the organization that has been so much a part of their lives and a part of mine.

We are denying the opportunity for them to do that. There are a lot of reasons for us to pass this. I hear people say we have less than ten percent of the eligible veterans, we should sign them up. I have heard that for thirty years that I have been a member of this organization.

It is not going to happen. We are going to sign up new members, we are going to sign up younger members, but we are not going to sign up the 90 percent that don't belong. There are Posts in our organization that are struggling. They are struggling with an aging population in their Posts. They would like to continue to do the programs that they had done all of their lives in the VFW, and they don't have the strength or the energy or the

age any more to do it. But their sons or their grandsons would come in and carry the burden for them because of the pride they have in the Veterans of Foreign Wars. For all of those reasons, we should form a men's auxiliary to the VFW. I ask you to pass this by-law change.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 3.

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK (Post 3355 - New Jersey): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, John Senk, a delegate from Post 3355, Cranford, New Jersey. Comrades, I come to the floor originally for a point of clarification. That was to tell you that last year in the convention floor I stood there and told you during the debate on whether or not to raise the age limits of our sons of the VFW, that we had an alternative plan, that we had something we thought would fit, something that the national officers believed would work to help our Posts and to solve that problem.

This by-law amendment, comrades, is that offering. Gene George stood here and said it has to be passed by the convention at the Department Convention. We sent something out to each one of the Departments telling them that this by-law amendment was going to be offered and suggested to them, and many have done it, they pass a by-law amendment to their Department by-laws allowing for this with the provision that the National Organization at the National Convention pass a by-law amendment that we are debating now.

So that is in the works and many Departments have them now. Having said that, let me say this. I stand here now as a father and as a delegate. I have a daughter who has just turned 16 and she is a member of the Ladies Auxiliary. I have a son that will not have the opportunity.

Let me tell you something, comrades. My daughter has other interests. My son is at this convention with me. He loves this organization. Give him an opportunity to allow him to serve veterans. I urge you, comrades, to pass this Resolution. Give the Posts that need the help and want the help the opportunity to do it. Thank you, comrades.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE VICTOR FUENTEALBA (Post 9083 - Maryland): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Victor Fuentealba, Post 9083, Parkville, Maryland, Department of Maryland. I rise in support of this amendment. I ask you, delegates, not to look at this emotionally, but look at it realistically.

My Post is the second largest Post in the state of Maryland. We have a canteen, but I am not up here supporting this amendment because of the canteen. I am up here supporting it because I think this is the best thing for my Post and every Post in the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

We have all seen the great work that has been done by the Ladies Auxiliary. The same type of work can be done by a men's auxiliary. Our Posts need help. Sure, we are trying to recruit new members. Every day we are out trying to recruit new members.

We are losing members fast by death and we are losing workers, we are losing volunteers. If we create a men's auxiliary, we have a large pool of relatives who can help support the Posts, not in the canteens but in the

many programs that benefit the VFW, which in turn will help increase membership.

I think the most significant part of this amendment, which you have to bear in mind, is the fact that it is not mandatory. It has to be adopted by your Department and then even if it is adopted by your Department, your Post doesn't have to participate.

So I ask you, those of you who are opposed, to vote in favor of it because you don't have to go along with it if you don't want to. Let the others who do want that opportunity have that opportunity. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE ROBERT SPRUTE (Post 5625 - Florida): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the speaker who just preceded me brought out the points I wanted to emphasize and I want to say it again. By passing this Resolution, we are not passing a mandate.

We are not telling every state that belongs to the Veterans of Foreign Wars that you must have a male auxiliary. We are not telling every Post within a Department that we have passed a Resolution at National and you must have an auxiliary. We are not saying that, because it very well may be that maybe this male auxiliary is not really good for that particular Post.

By those of us who have read our mail from the National Organization, went to your convention and dealt with that at your State Convention as we did in Florida, we passed it in Florida. We have it ready to go should it be passed here. It doesn't mean that we will mandate it to our Districts or our Posts.

It simply means we afford them the opportunity to bring these people in to help our older people to help with the programs within the Posts. I guarantee you that our thought was not to bring them in to see how much revenue we can gain at the canteen.

Let me tell you something else while we are talking about this. I fail to understand why we are so reluctant to let the rest of the community and the rest of the world know what the hell we are all about. That just boggles my mind. Let me give you one more point.

When we brought a VOD winner to our organization for his award, he told me, and I want you to listen to this, he told me, "I am very enthused about this. I have often driven by your VFW Post. I often wondered what was inside. I knew that I could not go in there. I never knew what a POW/MIA flag meant."

His parents were probably about forty and they said, "You know, we didn't, either." I am saying that I support this Resolution wholeheartedly for more than one reason. It allows the exposure within the community to let the community know we are not a canteen, in essence, we are a Post doing community work and working for the good of the United States and all the people in the United States, not just the organization itself. Thank you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE ALLEN JONES (Post 21 - Pennsylvania): Comrade

Commander-in-Chief, Allen Jones, National Council member and a member of the By-Laws Committee, speaking in opposition to this by-law. I want to say to all of you, comrades, I have belonged to this organization 55 years.

I have a son that went to a number of conventions and went home with tears in his eyes. To this day, my son has never said to me, "Why can't I join the VFW or why isn't there something for me?" We have Sons of the VFW and we should raise the age limit there and it would take care of what we are talking about today.

When I listen to comrades saying about involving the community in the work of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, all I can say to you is shame on you. If you have not gone into your community, when you have a Voice of Democracy program or other community projects and seek out individuals in the education field and the lawyer field, and the other branches of people involved in other service organizations, then shame on you.

The chairman for the Voice of Democracy for my school district is the Superintendent of Schools. Do your homework. Don't come back and talk about putting an auxiliary in to do something that maybe you are not doing in your local community.

My greatest fear is not today, comrades, not tomorrow, but the next day once you establish this auxiliary they will get in line and say then why can't we have our own convention like the Ladies Auxiliary? That is down the road I am looking at.

I am looking at the fear of us organizing something like this or allowing something to happen is a new auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I again joined this organization and I can remember that at one time the Past National Commander-in-Chief, one of the finest we ever had, Jimmy Van Zandt, continuously got up on the National Convention floor and fought there would never be any ladies in our organization.

Jimmy passed on and it happened. So those things happen. But my greatest fear, I have stated to you, and I urge you to defeat this amendment to the by-laws. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE LAWSON VAN ORMER (Department of Maryland): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Lawson Van Ormer from the Department of Maryland. I rise in favor of this for three reasons. First, Commander-in-Chief, earlier a friend and colleague Past Commander-in-Chief Gunner Kent brought up the point it would be a slap in the face for our combat veterans to have gentlemen who were not combat oriented or military oriented to be a member of our organization.

First, I think that if we look at it, that is the epitome of hypocrisy. Earlier this morning we passed a Resolution to allow women in combat. We are going to allow these women in combat and place them in harm's way, but yet tell them at the same time that their husbands and sons are not eligible for our auxiliary. I don't understand that; I don't understand that at all.

The second point, I, too, have one daughter in the Auxiliary. I have one

son in the Veterans of Foreign Wars and I have two sons who, God willing and I thank the Lord every day, are not eligible for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Why should they not be able to support our organization. I don't understand that either.

My third and final point is this. On the Department level and on a National level, I hear all the time how National is trying to take control of our Posts, take control of our Departments, and on the Department level I hear how the Department is trying to take control of our Posts.

Gentlemen, this is giving the control back to your Post. Nobody is telling you that you have to have an auxiliary. What we are telling you or what they are telling you is you may have it. You don't have to have anything. It is your choice. It is your membership's choice. I rise in full support of this proposal.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE RANDALL BARE (Post 6669 - West Virginia): I stand opposed to this motion. We have an auxiliary, we debated today that training should be equal for men and women. The auxiliary should be equal for men and women. I would love nothing better than for my son to go to a meeting with his mother than to go to his own meeting. I stand opposed to this, and I call for the question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Will you repeat that last statement?

COMRADE RANDALL BARE (Post 6669 - West Virginia): I call for the question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: You called for the question. Do we have a second?

COMRADE PHIL PHILLIPS (Post 322 - Colorado): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Phil Phillips, Post 322, Colorado. I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: We have a motion and a second that calls for the question. All in favor of calling for the question signify by saying "aye"; all opposed. The motion carried.

We will now vote on the adoption of B-3. All in favor of B-3 signify by saying "aye"; all opposed "no". The chair is in doubt. I will call for a roll-call vote.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Sergeant-at-Arms, get the tally sheets out, please.

...As Adjutant General Senk

called the roll, the following votes were cast: ..

NAME	YES	NO
Commander-in-Chief	X	
Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief		X
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief	X	
Adjutant General	X	
Quartermaster General	X	
Judge Advocate General		X
Surgeon General		X

National Chaplain	X	
National Chief of Staff	X	
Inspector General	X	
Council Member, District No. 1		X
Council Member, District No. 2	X	
Council Member, District No. 3	X	
Council Member, District No. 4	X	
Council Member, District No. 5	X	
Council Member, District No. 6		X

COMRADE DAVID SLIDER (Post 6441 - Texas): A point of order. I am a registered delegate. I am not recorded on my State Commander's list, and I fail to see that any of this vote is legal unless all of the delegates are so notified by their State Commanders.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: When did you register, sir?

COMRADE DAVID SLIDER (Post 6441 - Texas): I registered on Saturday morning. I have my delegate credentials with me and if the Commander would like to examine it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Bring it forward to the table over here.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Comrades, we will check his credentials out. If he is found to have registered, we will change his vote.

NAME	YES	NO
Council Member, District No. 7		X
Council Member, District No. 8		X
Council Member, District No. 9		X
Council Member, District No. 10		
Council Member, District No. 11		X
Council Member, District No. 12	X	
Council Member, District No. 13	X	
Council Member, District No. 14		
Council Member, District No. 15		
Council Member, District No. 16		X
Council Member, District No. 17		X
Council Member, District No. 18	X	
Council Member, District No. 19	X	
Council Member, District No. A		X
Council Member, District No. B	X	
Council Member, District No. C	X	
Council Member, District No. D		
Council Member, District No. E	X	
Council Member, District No. F	X	
Council Member, District No. G		
Council Member, District No. H		
Council Member, District No. J	X	
Past Commander-in-Chief Billy Cameron		X
Past Commander-in-Chief George Cramer	X	

Past Commander-in-Chief James R. Currieo		X
Past Commander-in-Chief Arthur Fellwock	X	
Past Commander-in-Chief Allen F. Kent		X
Past Commander-in-Chief John Moon		X
Past Commander-in-Chief James E. Nier		X
Past Commander-in-Chief Clifford Olson	X	
Past Commander-in-Chief Thomas A. Pouliot		X
Past Commander-in-Chief Larry W. Rivers		X
Past Commander-in-Chief R. D. Smith		X
Past Commander-in-Chief Ray Soden	X	
Past Commander-in-Chief Paul Spera	X	
Past Commander-in-Chief Norman G. Staab		X
Past Commander-in-Chief John Stang		X
Past Commander-in-Chief Robert Wallace	X	

STATE	YES	NO
Alabama	154	40
Alaska		82
Arizona		188
Arkansas	101	83
California	459	160
Colorado	205	
Connecticut	116	
Delaware	71	74
District of Columbia	2	28
Department of Europe		72
Florida	401	44
Georgia		181
Hawaii	19	
Idaho	51	8
Illinois	390	360
Indiana	415	
Iowa		170
Kansas	196	98
Kentucky	195	3
Latin America/Caribbean		19
Louisiana		153
Maine	91	69
Maryland	230	
Massachusetts	275	23
Michigan	473	62
Minnesota	320	106
Mississippi		132
Missouri	295	
Montana	65	10
Nebraska	142	90

Nevada		60
New Hampshire	89	96
New Jersey		
New Mexico	1	117
New York	385	35
North Carolina	1	179
North Dakota	131	1
Ohio	844	4
Oklahoma		219
Oregon		82
Pacific Areas		65
Pennsylvania	101	564
Rhode Island	58	
South Carolina	168	1
South Dakota	107	55
Tennessee		159
Texas	104	477
Utah		40
Vermont	117	1
Virginia		180
Washington	43	180
West Virginia	8	210
Wisconsin	97	386
Wyoming	38	1

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Comrades, there were 12,486 votes cast. 7,045 yes, 5,441 no. A two-thirds vote required 8,324. The amendment was defeated.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: I will call to the podium Past Commander-in-Chief Paul Spera.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SPERA: Comrade Commander-in-Chief and comrades, we had some by-law changes that were recommended disapproval. But first let me announce that By-Law B-8, due to a clerical error in the National Headquarters that by-law is not being submitted at this convention with the apologies to the Department and the comrades of Ohio.

Those by-laws that were recommended for rejection are: B-4, B-5 recommended for rejection in favor of B-1. Also B-9, B-10, B-11.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE DEAN WHITE (Post 27 - Department of Europe): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I ask that B-4 be set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: B-4 is to be set aside.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE GEORGE BETHUME (Post 969 - Washington): Commander-in-Chief, I ask that B-10 be set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: I apologize. Will you repeat that?

COMRADE GEORGE BETHUME (Post 969 - Washington): I ask that B-10 be set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE DENNIS NELSON (Post 17 - South Dakota): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I ask for B-11 to be set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: If no others are to be set aside, I will accept the rejection of the by-law changes.

Now before us is B-4. What is your recommendation? Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE DEAN WHITE (Post 27 - Department of Europe): Commander-in-Chief, I rise in favor of this by-law, that it be accepted.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Do you move to adopt?

COMRADE DEAN WHITE (Post 27 - Department of Europe): I move to adopt.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: There is no second on the motion.

COMRADE DEAN WHITE (Post 27 - Department of Europe): The second is coming, please, sir.

COMRADE TODD OTA (Post 3885 - Department of Europe): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: We have a second. Is there any question on the motion? Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE DEAN WHITE (Post 27 - Department of Europe): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, this recommendation needs to be approved, because the Selective Service requirement is for all residents of the United States to register for the draft. That means anybody regardless of their citizenship may serve in our armed forces.

When they serve honorably and receive the appropriate recognition, we turn around and say you are not good enough. You can die for our country, you can serve our country, but you are not good enough to join the Veterans of Foreign Wars. This is not the message we want to send to the people that are serving in our armed forces.

Dropping the citizenship requirement makes all eligible veterans eligible to join the VFW. We need to do that.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DAVID SLIDER (Post 6441 - Texas): Commander-in-Chief, I rise to say that this particular one must be rejected because it does, if we do what is described here, we will remove the necessity of being a citizen of the United States of America in order to belong to this great organization.

Comrade Commander, I feel it is very necessary that you be a citizen of the United States. I urge all to reject this motion. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you,

Microphone No. 1. Any further discussion? Any further discussion? If not, the motion is to adopt B-4. All in favor signify by saying "aye"; all opposed "no". The motion is defeated. What is your desire on B-10?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE GEORGE BETHUME (Post 969 - Washington): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move to adopt B-10.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: There is nobody at Microphone 1, 2 or 3.

COMRADE DON WEBSTER (Post 9957 - Pacific Areas): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: The Chairman will now give his report on why they rejected B-10.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SPERA: The effect of this proposal was to give every state permanent representation on the National Council with the Council member entitled to one vote for every 5,000 members. It would also permit the Commander-in-Chief to authorize the Department Commander to vote when the Council member is absent.

This would increase the Council to 64 people with no limitation on the amount of travel to the Department functions, and additionally almost all Council votes would require a roll call in order to determine whether a majority of the votes existed, and this would make the actions of the Council meetings cumbersome.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE GEORGE BETHUME (Post 969 - Washington): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, there are several issues here that are at hand. One of them is the complexity of 64 Council members, and to begin with I have heard many people say that it would create a complexity.

I think that is an affront, not only to yourself as Commander-in-Chief but to all of those previously, they could not conduct a meeting with 64 people. I believe that you are more capable than that and any other Commander-in-Chief in the past or in the future who could do that.

I have seen many examples of when this should be done and this representation. This very morning, we gave an award to a young man, and it very clearly stated one voice can make a difference. I want to assure you and the delegates here that many Council meetings that one voice was not heard.

I can state for a fact that two years ago at our National Convention that there were three Departments that had no voice on that Council, because our Council member was ill. We had no voice, we had no vote, we had no way whatsoever, no provisions made to do anything.

This would eliminate that problem. This country, our Constitution was framed on democracy where one man and one vote, equal voice, equal representation. This is framed exactly the same as our Congress, and I don't think that you would want some person from Seattle getting up and speaking for your state. That is what is happening within the Council.

This very morning we just cast a vote. My Council member has to represent three Departments. He had two in favor and one against. Now, do you think he was able when he cast his vote to represent those three Departments he was committed to? It makes it virtually impossible.

Also, the cost was brought up. I can tell you just this last year the Council member from Japan, the membership of this organization had to

pick up the bill for him to fly to the Philippines, to Alaska, to Hawaii, and to Central America -- that is a tremendous expense -- only so he could speak to those Departments he was representing.

When he got here today, he couldn't represent them again because he can't speak or vote for four different Departments that see four different ways. This is, as I said, the only way that every Department has a voice. To me, and I believe to the delegates here, there is nothing more important than each Department to be able to express how they feel and to cast a ballot that reflects the true feeling of the membership of this organization. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE GEORGE LANGE (Post 284 - Washington, D.C.): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, in the listing of the Departments on that particular change, it listed the Department of Washington, D.C. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, there is no Department of Washington, D.C. It is the Department of the District of Columbia, and we also have the number one charter issued by this organization, and the charter is in my possession. I think we may have a technicality here that may void the entire matter. Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Carry on with the debate. Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE DON FENTER (Post 5263 - Oklahoma): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Don Fenter, a delegate from Post 5263, Fort Sill, Oklahoma. I speak in opposition to this amendment and I speak in opposition if we have a Department Commander and we are going to have a Council member for each state, then that Department Council member should be the State Commander.

If there is anybody who is going to present the state argument, it should be that man. I don't need another voice to represent me and maybe not represent what our membership wants. The Commander of that state is bound by the oath he took to represent what his members want. Other Council members would not be bound by that same oath. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, Microphone No. 3. Is there any further debate? Is there any further debate? We now move to adopt B-10. All in favor of adopting B-10 signify by saying "aye"; all opposed. The motion is defeated.

We will now debate B-11.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE DENNIS NELSON (Post 17 - South Dakota): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Dennis Nelson from Post 17, Aberdeen, South Dakota. I move we adopt B-11.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: The motion is to adopt B-11. Do we have a second?

Microphone No. 1? Microphone No. 2? Microphone No. 3?

COMRADE DARYL HALLING (Post 3164 - South Dakota): I second the

motion to adopt.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, comrades. I now ask the Chairman to give us a briefing on B-11.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SPERA: Comrade Commander-in-Chief and comrades, the effect of this proposal would eliminate the provision in our by-laws that prohibits joint ownership of property with other veterans organizations. The provision prohibiting the joint ownership of property was recommended to the By-Laws Study Committee and adopted by the convention in 1991.

It was adopted because of numerous incidents in which Posts got into arrangements with other veterans organizations that resulted in the Post losing both their money and their property as a result of poor management, disputes with other organizations, or situations where one of the other veterans organizations simply took over.

Additionally, these arrangements often end up in disputes that cost money, result in bad publicity and left a bad public impression of the organization. It is not good to have organizations fighting with one another, but that is what often occurred in these ownership situations.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE DENNIS NELSON (Post 17 - South Dakota): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am here to attend my first National VFW Convention. I am here to learn. I am here to meet and make new friends and comrades. I am also here to support a change in our National By-Laws.

You see, Post 17 initiated the change in the by-laws for what we feel is for the good of the VFW. We brought it up last year. It was defeated. We bring it up again this year, because the VFW needs to change with the times. I do not have to tell you that we are losing members at an alarming rate.

My father-in-law succumbed to cancer earlier this year. Okinawa, Purple Heart, Bronze Stars, he was one of the three to four each Monday from our Post who we honor with taps. Our Post just a few years ago was over 1,000 members and today we are struggling at 700.

Fellow comrades, we need to be practical. The proposal would allow for co-ownership of the VFW Post Home with other veterans organizations. It is not, I repeat, not to allow co-ownerships with individuals, not with other businesses, not with the other fraternal organizations.

This would not allow for a merger where there are two entities unite and become a new organization. But it would allow for co-ownership with other veteran organizations, where both maintain their own charter and their own identity. In Aberdeen, for example, we have over 60 percent of our members who are members of other veterans organizations.

Comrades, our competition in other privately-owned bars and fraternal organizations are our enemies. Our allies are other veterans organizations. In towns with populations of over 100,000 people, they have little or no problem supporting a VFW Post and other military organization's Posts.

But 100,000 is not typical of rural America nor typical of South Dakota. There are many Post homes that it is just a matter of time. Soon the veterans organizations will not be able to maintain separate buildings and with

closings there will be a lack of interest, and with a lack of interest there will be a decline of membership.

This, then, is contrary to the very reason that veterans organizations were established, to help veterans receive the benefits they are entitled to. Our by-laws need some flexibility to allow for co-ownership of facilities with our allies, other veterans organizations.

By passing the change to the by-laws, you will be allowing for allies to work together and become a stronger voice for the veteran. It is time, Comrade Commander-in-Chief. It has been time for a long time. I ask for your support in the passage of this change. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, comrade.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE RON AMEND (Post 7486 - Minnesota): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I come before you to speak as opposed to this for one purpose only. When you have the VFW organization, you have another organization that owns, and I have reference to a club room, for instance, we put our Post on suspension, they say don't own the club room, the members want to go to the club room and they don't care about.

If we don't have control of that building, we can't control what is going on there and I am saying that we should vote against this.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE WARREN TELGREN (Post 9644 - Colorado): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I rise in opposition to this. The Department of Colorado last year finally settled a lawsuit in which it cost the Department over \$37,000 because of a joint ownership and a joint organization.

One of the members, the employees, filed a lawsuit against members of the other organization and we ended up paying for the lawsuit. Also, we had another Post who had joint ownership of property, and they were grandfathered, but that Post and the two other service organizations that were in with them went to court, and it cost more money for that Post to get out of it. I urge that this amendment be rejected.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, Microphone No. 2. Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE BUDDI HARLAN (Post 4010 - Texas): I call for the question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: There has been a call for the question. Do I have a second?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE RON AMEND (Post 7486 - Michigan): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: The motion before you is to call for the question. All in favor signify by saying "aye"; all opposed "no". The motion carried.

We will go to the vote. All in favor of adopting B-11 signify by saying "aye"; all opposed "no". The Resolution is rejected.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SPERA: Comrade Commander-in-

Chief, the next item is the changes to the Manual of Procedure.

It is the recommendation of the Committee that the following changes be adopted: M-1, M-2, M-3, M-4, M-5 and M-6. I move the adoption of those changes.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN STANG (Post 3147 - Kansas): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: You have heard the motion before you. Is there any question? If not, all in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed. The amendments to the Manual of Procedure are passed. Thank you.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SPERA: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, M-7 is automatically rejected due to the rejection of B-3, and M-8 is automatically rejected due to the rejection of B-4.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: If there are no further questions on those that have been rejected, they are rejected.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SPERA: The final item is proposed amendments to the Ritual, R-1, and the Committee recommended adoption of R-1. I move adoption.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN STANG (Post 3147 - Kansas): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: The motion has been made and seconded to adopt R-1. Is there any question? If no questions, all in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed. R-1 is adopted.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SPERA: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, that completes the work of the By-Laws Committee. I want to thank those members of the Committee that participated, and a special thanks to the Vice-Chairman. Thank you, Comrade Commander.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Comrade Chairman, you and your Committee are now relieved of your duties and responsibilities.

PRESENTATION BY WILLIAM McCARTHY
VFW POST 9864 - BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: At this time I want to call for a special presentation, and please welcome to the microphone, National Council Member-Elect William McCarthy, representing VFW Post 864 in Brookline, Massachusetts.

COMRADE WILLIAM McCARTHY (Post 864 - Massachusetts): Thank you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief John Smart. I would like to introduce to you the Post Commander of the Steven S. Rutledge Post 864 in Brookline for a presentation of \$10,000 to the World War II Memorial.

THE POST COMMANDER (Post 864 - Massachusetts): On behalf of the membership of the Steven F. Rutledge Post 864, Brookline, Massachusetts, it gives me a great honor and privilege to present a check to the World War II Memorial Fund for \$10,000. Thank you. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF RECOGNITION PLAQUE TO
PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CLYDE LEWIS BY VFW EMPLOYEES'
RETIREMENT PLAN BOARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: At this time I want to call up Bill Smith for a presentation.

COMRADE WILLIAM SMITH: I will ask the New York delegation to please join up here on the stage. I am William Smith, Director of Public Affairs in Washington. I am currently also the VFW employees' representative to the VFW Employee Retirement Board. I am here today on behalf of more than 600 VFW employees and retirees.

This morning we honor a VFW member who has been with the VFW since 1945. He enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1942, went through flight training, received a commission and his pilot wings in 1943. He was assigned to Europe and flew bombers. After he finished one tour, he volunteered for a second tour.

In all he spent 21 months overseas.

He returned home and joined the VFW and four years later he was the Commander-in-Chief of the VFW, 1949-1950. In everything he has done, Clyde A. Lewis has been a leader.

For over a half century, he has been an advocate for VFW employees. Recognizing that an important asset of the VFW is its employees, he was instrumental in the creation of the VFW Retirement Program and has served on the VFW Employee Retirement Board for over 40 years.

Those employees who work in the VFW in Kansas City, Washington, D.C., and the Ladies Auxiliary, as well as those employees at many VFW Departments, have a lot to thank Clyde Lewis for. His foresight and planning, coupled with a lot of hard work on his part, went into building the Employee Retirement Program we have today. It is one of the best there is.

Accepting this award of appreciation on behalf of Past Commander-in-Chief Clyde Lewis is the Chairman of the VFW Employees' Retirement Board, Past Commander-in-Chief Ted Connell.

The award reads:

"Presented to Clyde A. Lewis for your leadership role in establishing an outstanding pension plan to benefit VFW employees and your unwavering support of VFW employees through your 40 years of service on the VFW Retirement Board.

"You are a hero and we thank you." It is signed "VFW Employees, Past, Present and Future."

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TED CONNELL: On behalf of the Board, I wish to thank Bill Smith. To my immediate rear is the Department of New York representatives here. Old father time has taken its toll and our Past Commander-in-Chief cannot be with us.

The World War II veterans out in this audience understand the problem. Many of us represent the problem. On behalf of the six hundred plus employees, I can tell you firsthand that at each meeting we had to hear the

history of our retirement. Each of you out there would be really proud of the attitude and outlook of our six hundred plus retired personnel.

Also on their behalf today, I wish to thank you. I wish to thank the Council and I wish to represent all of the Past Chiefs through the 44 years that we nominated Clyde for this job. We have a great working relationship with the National Organization and all of us on the Retirement Board thank you and thank the delegates. Thank you. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF THE BUDDY POPPY DISPLAY CONTEST WINNERS

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: While we are waiting for the Parade Committee, also let me make the announcement for the Buddy Poppy Display Winners.

Category 1 - Public Promotion of Poppy Sales.

First place - Ambraw Post & Auxiliary No. 2244, Lawrenceville, Illinois.

Second place - Kearny-Mesa Post & Auxiliary No. 3788, San Diego, California.

Third place - Sergeant John Rice Post & Auxiliary No. 6316, Blaine, Minnesota.

Honorable Mention - Robert E. Stoddard Post & Auxiliary No. 4343, Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Director's Award - Raymond McGill Post & Auxiliary No. 2256, Benton, Arkansas.

Category 2 - Memorial or Inspirational Displays.

First place - Ira L. Cates Post & Auxiliary No. 318, Olympia, Washington.

Second place - Metry Post & Auxiliary No. 6640, Metairie, Louisiana.

Third place - Bunting-McWilliams Post & Auxiliary No. 658, Macon, Georgia.

Honorable Mention - William Earl Stone Memorial Post & Auxiliary No. 5228, Smiths, Alabama.

Director's Award - Tom Wolfe Memorial Post & Auxiliary No. 4207, Monett, Missouri.

Category 3 - Artistic or Decorative Use of Poppies.

First place - Fairview Memorial Post & Auxiliary No. 8677, Fairview Heights, Illinois.

Second place - Sergeant John Rice Post & Auxiliary No. 6316, Blaine, Minnesota.

Third place - Joe Nic Barco Memorial Post & Auxiliary No. 7122, Floral City, Florida.

Honorable Mention - George G. Stoll Post & Auxiliary No. 3343, Clyde, Ohio.

Category 4 (Junior Units) - Memorial Inspirational Displays.

First place - Tioga Junior Girls Unit No. 2149, Wood Dale, Illinois.

Second Place - Whitehead-Muzzall Junior Girls Unit No. 7392, Oak Harbor, Washington.

Third Place - Francis Brown Lowry Junior Girls Unit No. 501, Denver, Colorado.

Honorable Mention - Leonard Sexton Memorial Junior Girls Unit No. 6590, Wrightstown-Cookstown, New Jersey. They received honorable mention.

PRESENTATION OF PARADE AWARDS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Once again, for the presentation of Parade Awards, I call on Chairman Bob Brady.

COMRADE BOB BRADY (Department of Pennsylvania): The results of the Field Contest, as well as the Patriotic Rally last night, the Junior-Senior ROTC Competition is the Silent Sixteen from the Department of Connecticut, who will again represent us at the Army-Navy game in Philadelphia.

The Ladies Division, the Senior Ladies VFW Auxiliary Color Guard competition was won by the Department of Arkansas, District No. 6.

In our Junior ROTC Competitions, the First Place in the Junior ROTC Color Guard Competition was won by the Griffin High School JROTC. This unit also won the JROTC Armed Drill Team Competition. They represent VFW Posts 8486 and 5448 of Griffin, Georgia.

The Junior Open Field Contest was won by an Air Force ROTC Unit from Spring Valley High School, the Department of South Carolina. They are from Columbia, South Carolina.

The next award will be the other unit that tied with them. We have a tie of the Junior ROTC Unarmed Drill Team. The tie for first place is between Spring Valley High School of Columbia, South Carolina, and with Stebbens High School of Riverside, Ohio. This is awarded jointly.

The following award has been made to Spring Valley High School. They are winner of the VFW National Championship JROTC Unit. Also, they will be awarded the All-Girl Junior ROTC Unit Championship Award. Spring Valley, thank you very much for your participation.

Each year, following our presentations on Wednesday, we have our Ritual Team Contest. Of course, the Ritual Team winner doesn't get this recognition. So we are calling in last year's winner for 1999, Winner of the VFW National Ritual Team Contest. The winner is the Department of Washington, District No. 11.

We will be having the Ritual Team Contest today at 2:00 p.m. in Room 102, A and B. Everyone is invited.

The winners of last evening's Patriotic Rally are as follows:

In the Men's Division, the Third Place winner was the Department of Wisconsin. The Second Place winner was the Department of Iowa, and the winner is the Department of New Jersey.

The winner in the Ladies Auxiliary category, the Third Place winner was the Department of Wisconsin. The Second Place winner is the Department of Arkansas, and the First Place winner is the Department of Minnesota. We

thank you all for your participation in the contests and we look forward to serving you next year. Thank you.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: We are now going to do the last Committee Report for today, the Veterans Service Resolutions, Past Commander-in-Chief George R. Cramer.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GEORGE CRAMER: Thank you. Good afternoon. Commander-in-Chief Smart, I would like to bring you a Report of the Convention Committee on Veterans Service Resolutions. We convened Sunday, and I would like to commend my Vice-Chairman and Past National Commander-in-Chief R. D. Smith for helping me chair this Committee.

The Quartermaster General ran out of laptops and he ran out of money, so we would like to thank Bill Dozier for serving as our Secretary during the report of this Committee. Because we had some 93 Resolutions that were assigned to our Committee, we decided to form some Sub-Committees.

Sub-Committee 1 contained medical programs and veterans benefits, and that Committee was chaired by Tom Hansen of Minnesota and Vice-Chairman was Glen Tewksbury from Connecticut. We formed a Sub-Committee on Employment. That Committee was chaired by Gary Kurpius from Alaska and Vice Chairman Bill Allen from Pennsylvania.

And finally, we had a catch-all Committee and other benefits, which was chaired by Jim Winsenhaller from New York and Vice-Chairman was Walter Langor, from Oregon.

If I may, Commander-in-Chief, I will proceed by reading the amendments that were approved as written.

Resolution 601, Sexual Trauma Treatment for all Veterans.

Resolution 602, Adequately Fund the Veterans Health Care System Construction Program.

Resolution 604, Amend the Uniformed Services Former Spouses Protection Act.

Resolution 605, Concurrent Receipt of Retirement Pay and Veterans Disability Compensation.

Resolution 606, Amended Tax Returns for Military Retirees.

Resolution 607, Exclude Guard and Reserve Income When Determining Eligibility for Unemployment Insurance.

Resolution 608, Veterans Employment Program to Remain a National Mandate.

Resolution 609, Federal Employees' Health Benefit Program for Military Retirees.

Resolution 610, Third-Party Reimbursement Without Offset.

Resolution 612, Receipt of Compensation or Dependency and Indemnity Compensation Based on Personal Income.

Resolution 613, Presumption of Service Connection for Radiation-

Related Disabilities.

Resolution 614, Support an Effective Veterans Employment and Training Service.

Resolution No. 615, Oppose Termination Date for the Gulf War as Recommended by the Commission on Service Members and Veterans' Transition Assistance.

Resolution No. 617, Funding Fee for VA Home Loans.

Resolution No. 618, Necessary Funding for the Local Veterans Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists.

Resolution 619, Support Priority of Service for Veterans to All Federally-Funded Job Training Programs.

Resolution 621, Cost-of-Living Increase for VA Beneficiaries and Military Retirees.

Resolution 623, Exclusive Appropriations Subcommittees for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Resolution 624, Funding of SBA Veterans Programs.

Resolution 626, Exempt VA Disability Compensation in Determination of Eligibility for HUD's "Assisted Senior Housing Program."

Resolution 627, Disability Rating Schedule.

Resolution 628, Support for the Guard and Reserve.

Resolution 629, Specially Adapted Housing Allowance.

Resolution 630, Service Connection for Hearing Loss and Tinnitus for Combat Veterans.

Resolution 631, Licensure and Certification.

Resolution 632, Temporary Total Compensation Awards.

Resolution 633, Research on the Health Effects of Depleted Uranium and Implementation of an Education and Safety Training Program for All Ground Troops.

Resolution 634, Oppose Staff Reductions for the Veterans Benefits Administration.

Resolution 635, Equity in VA Health Care Co-Payments.

Resolution 636, Amend Internal Revenue Code Regarding State Veterans Home Bond Program.

Resolution 637, Support Legislation Providing Additional Benefits and Services to Vietnam Veterans' Children with Spina Bifida.

Resolution 638, Vocational Rehabilitation Eligibility.

Resolution 639, VA Demonstration Project for Alzheimer's Programs.

Resolution 640, VA to Pay Their Fair Share of Caring for Veterans Residing in State Veterans Homes.

Resolution 641, Restore Grant-in-Aid Hospital Program to the Filipino World War II Veterans in the Philippines.

Resolution 642, Service Connection for Chronic Peripheral Neuropathy and Diabetes as a Result of Exposure to Agent Orange.

Resolution 643, Hold the Administration and Congress Accountable.

Resolution 644, Repeal the Reduction of Compensation and Pension

for Incompetent Veterans.

Resolution 645, Veterans' Preference.

Resolution 646, Workforce Investment Act.

Resolution 647, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis High Among Gulf War Veterans.

Resolution 648, Establishing a Presumption of Service Connection for Veterans Suffering from Hepatitis "C".

Resolution 649, Solvency for the Armed Forces Retirement Homes.

Resolution 650, A G.I. Bill for the 21st Century.

Resolution 651, Homeless Veterans.

Resolution 653, Removal of the Limitation on Payment of Accrued Benefits.

Resolution 654, Include Dental Care as Part of VHA's Veterans Uniform Benefits Package.

Resolution 657, Post Exchange and Commissary Privileges for U.S. Military Retirees Residing or Traveling Overseas.

Resolution 658, Timely Survivors' Benefit Program Entitlement Payment to Survivors.

Resolution 661, Guaranteed U.S. Armed Forces Medical Support for Retirees.

Resolution 667, Provide for the Maintenance and Upkeep of the Cemetery at Former Clark Air Base in the Republic of the Philippines.

Resolution 668, Benefits for Filipino Veterans and Scouts who Served with the U.S. Armed Forces During World War II.

Resolution 671, Eliminating Medicaid Eligibility for State Veterans Homes Participating in the VA State Home Program.

Resolution 677, The Use of the "Battlefield Cross" in National Cemeteries.

Resolution 678, Furnish Headstones or Markers for the Marked Graves of Certain Individuals.

Resolution 679, World War I Era Federal War Bonus.

Resolution 687, Preservation of the National Soldiers' Home Located at the VA Medical Center, West Los Angeles.

The next seven were add-ons in Committee. They were distributed in Committee and they were distributed to every Department at the convention this morning.

Resolution 688, Benefit for Cypan Marine Scouts Who Fought Alongside of U.S. Forces.

Resolution 689, Veterans Travel Pay.

Resolution 690, Reinstate Eligibility to Death Pension for Remarried Surviving Spouses.

Resolution 691, Special Compensation for Severely Disabled Veterans.

Resolution 692, Reimbursement of Burial Allowances.

And finally, Resolution 693, Adequately Fund the National Cemetery Administration and Expand Burial Rights.

If I did not read a particular Resolution, that does not mean it was

rejected. It may have been adopted, as amended. Past Commander-in-Chief Bulldog Smith will read those.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I would move the adoption of these Resolutions.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF R. D. SMITH (Post 3346 - Georgia): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: The motion before you is to adopt the Resolutions. Is there any question? All those in favor of accepting the recommendation of the Committee, please signify by saying "aye"; all opposed. The recommendation is accepted.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF R. D. SMITH (Post 3346 - Georgia): Comrade Commander and delegates, these were the Resolutions that were approved, as amended:

Resolution 603, The Department of Veterans Affairs Budget.

Resolution 611, Entitlement to Nursing Home Care.

Resolution 616, Improved VA Hospital Facilities for Women Veterans.

Resolution 620, Oppose Permanent Extension of Certain OBRA Provisions.

Resolution 622, VA Medicare Subvention.

Resolution 625, Support for Gulf War Veterans.

Resolution 652, Compensable Disability for Hearing Loss for Veterans Requiring Hearing Aids.

Resolution 655, Establish a VA Assistance Office in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Resolution 656, Veterans Employment Preference with the U.S. Government Overseas.

Resolution 664, Repeal the "Catch 62" Bill.

Resolution 669, Support a Gulf War Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Resolution 670, Change Pension Eligibility Requirements of United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

Resolution 672, Place World War II Veterans in Category Six for VA Health Purposes.

Resolution 682, Medal of Honor.

Commander-in-Chief, these were Resolutions that were approved as amended. I move they be accepted.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GEORGE CRAMER (Post 686 - Illinois): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: The motion before us is to accept the recommendation of the Resolutions, as amended. Are there any questions? If there are no questions, all in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed. The Resolutions are adopted.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GEORGE CRAMER (Post 686 - Illinois): Thank you. Finally, Commander-in-Chief and delegates to the 101st National Convention, these are the Resolutions that we recommend be rejected:

Resolution 676, A Presidential Posthumous Pardon for Private Edward D. Slovik, U.S. Army. We suggested that it be rejected, not enough to support that Private Slovik had an unfair trial.

Resolution 680, Request VA to Establish a Comprehensive Examination and Monitoring Program for Veterans Exposed to Various Health Hazards While in the Military Service. We suggest rejection in favor of Resolution No. 625.

Resolution 681, Recognizing and Honoring the U.S. Navy Gun Crews Serving on U.S. Supply Ships during World Wars I and II. We suggest rejection because it was accomplished already, eligible for the combat action group.

Resolution 683, Equity in VA Health Care Co-Payment. We rejected this in favor of Resolution 635.

Resolution 684, Veterans' Right to Medical Care Would be Detrimental. We suggest rejection because it would be detrimental to the national service-connected veterans.

Resolution 685, Veterans' Travel Pay. We suggest rejection in favor of Resolution No. 689.

Resolution 686, Construct a National Cemetery in Sacramento. We suggest rejection because it has already been accomplished. I missed a page. I apologize.

Resolution 659, Postal Privileges for Retirees. We rejected it because we felt it was not equitable to all veterans.

Resolution No. 660, Civil Service Employment Practices Standardization. We rejected it because we felt it could be harmful to some veterans.

Resolution 662, The Future of Pershing Hall. We rejected it because this has already been accomplished.

Resolution 663, Enforcement of Affirmative Action Worldwide. We rejected this because we felt it was a conflict with other treaties.

Resolution 665, Burial Criteria for National Guard and Reservists. We rejected this in favor of Resolution 693.

Resolution 666, Restore Grant-in-Aid Hospital Program to the Filipino World War II Veterans in the Philippines. We rejected this in favor of Resolution 641.

Resolution 673, Merger of State Agencies and Work Force Investment Act. We rejected this in favor of Resolutions Nos. 608, 614 and 619, which are issues specific.

Resolution 674, Veterans' Preference, Priority of Service, and Other Special Considerations in Employment and Training Programs. We rejected this in favor of Resolutions 614, 645 and 646, which are also issues specific.

Finally, Resolution 675, Retain Nationwide Programs of Employment Assistance for America's Veterans/Disabled Veterans as the Responsibility of the Federal Government. We rejected this in favor of Resolution No. 608.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I recommend the rejection of these

Resolutions.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE WILLIAM DOBIE (Post 4659 - Michigan): I ask that Resolution 676 be set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Resolution 676 is set aside. The Committee's recommendation is accepted except Resolution 676. We will now open it up for debate on Resolution 676. What is your pleasure?

COMRADE WILLIAM DOBIE (Post 4659 - Michigan): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, this Resolution originated --

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: We need a motion.

COMRADE WILLIAM DOBIE (Post 4659 - Michigan): I would like to make a motion this Resolution 676 be accepted.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Do we have a second?

COMRADE RON AMEND (Post 7486 - Michigan): Ron Amend, from the Department of Michigan, Post 7486, supports and seconds it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: It is in order. The Committee Chairman will respond.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GEORGE CRAMER: If I may, Comrade Commander and delegates to the 101st National Convention, I will read the "Resolves" if that is okay.

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we request that a Presidential Posthumous Pardon be considered for Private Edward D. Slovik as advocated by veterans and by Slovik's two ailing and aging sisters: Anna Kudlubowski and Marge Sobolewski; and

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in future, only members of front line units be allowed to sit, determine, judge, and review each case in the matter of desertions."

Again, the reason we suggested rejection is because we didn't feel there was enough evidence to prove that Slovik had had an unfair trial.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE WILLIAM DOBIE (Post 4659 - Michigan): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I would ask the delegates here in attendance to consider acceptance of this Resolution. Comrade Commander, I think that probably everyone in this room saw the movie.

Whether you were sympathetic to Private Slovik or not, it is mighty odd and mighty strange to me with the huge number of desertions, the huge number of convictions for desertion, the large number of death sentences issued, and the single death sentence carried out, I think that the question is almost moot.

It would be a wonderful thing to do for these two aging ladies, the sisters of Private Slovik, to place in the form of this Resolution to the President and ask for his pardon. I ask that the delegates do so.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 2.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GUNNER KENT (Post 9972 - Arizona): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I speak in favor of rejection of this Resolution. I sat on this Committee with Past Commander-in-Chief Cramer.

The way this Resolution is written, it is written in the sense that we are saying that the private did not have adequate defense at his court-martial.

My fellow comrades, we have no proof that he did not have adequate defense at his court martial. Until we receive that proof, we cannot make an honest judgment that he was not tried by a group of his peers, found guilty of desertion in the face of the enemy, and was subsequently found guilty and was ordered to be hung until he was dead, which was done. I speak in favor of rejection of this. Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Any more discussion? Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE BILL DOBIE (Post 4659 - Michigan): Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. Apparently, we just found the one person in this audience that didn't see the movie. The private was shot, but that is fine. Comrades and delegates, it is the right thing to do. It is something that I believe obviously went amiss during and following the appeals. I again say it is the right thing to do. I recommend acceptance. Thank you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Comrade, thank you. Any further discussion?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE RON RUSKO (Post 9460 - Connecticut): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I, too, rise to support the rejection of this Resolution, and I did not see the movie. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Any further discussion? Any further discussion?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE BRITTS MIHELIC (Post 4183 - Illinois): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, for us to stand here now and second-guess a court-martial and the appeals as they went through, I don't want to say it is a long shot, but what I do want to say as a practicing attorney, as a former judge and as a practicing attorney now again, you just can't do it. We weren't there. The evidence was presented.

If he did not have adequate assistance of counsel, that can be taken care of at the appellate stage. The matter was taken care of, the matter was presented to the proper authorities. It went up, and it may be an unfortunate case, it may be a miscarriage of justice but, nonetheless, the matter was resolved in the proper forum. This Resolution is not in the proper forum. That is all I have, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: There is no further debate on the floor. The motion before is to adopt Resolution 676. All in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed "no". The motion is defeated.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GEORGE CRAMER (Post 686 - Illinois): Comrade Commander-in-Chief and delegates to the 101st National Convention, on behalf of Past Commander-in-Chief Bulldog Smith and the

members of the Committee, I want to thank you for the assignment and appointment of this very effective Committee.

I certainly would be remiss in my duties if I did not thank Fred Juarbe and our entire Washington staff for their input and consultation during our deliberations. Thank you, fellows. Please stand and be recognized.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: I thank you and your Committee, George, and your Committee has now been relieved of its duties.

CLOSING CEREMONIES

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: At this time we will go into our Closing Ceremonies. To all the delegates and comrades here in the audience, I say thank you for taking the time to stay here for this whole meeting. We will have the Closing Ceremonies.

...Whereupon, the Salute to the Colors
was given, followed by the Benediction
by National Chaplain Vogler. ...

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you for another outstanding job. Comrades, this meeting is recessed and will start at 9:00 o'clock tomorrow morning.

(Whereupon, the session was recessed at 1:30 o'clock p.m.)

THIRD BUSINESS SESSION

THURSDAY MORNING, AUGUST 24, 2000

(The Third Business Session of the 101st National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, was called to order in the Midwest Express Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, at 9:00 o'clock a.m., with Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief John F. Gwizdak, presiding.)

CALL TO ORDER

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Comrade Sergeant-at-Arms, prepare the room for the Salute to the Colors, the Opening Prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Yes, sir, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

(Whereupon, National Sergeant-at-Arms Barry Hoffman led the Convention in the Salute to the Colors. The National Chaplain gave the Opening Prayer, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, the Opening Ceremony for today's business has been performed.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you so much. Please be seated. Let me express my thanks and those of the officers for you being here this morning and taking part in the Business Session again. I know yesterday we seemed to try to run a marathon, but business

does have to be completed so that we can take on other business today.

At this time I would like to have the Report of the Credentials Committee, Chairman Richard Trombla.

REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMRADE RICHARD TROMBLA (Post 1174 - Kansas): Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief and comrades, I am Richard Trombla, Chairman of the Credentials Committee, Post 1174 of Kansas. Comrades, this is a temporary report of the Credentials Committee as of 4:00 o'clock yesterday.

Total delegates, 12,993; Department Commanders, 53; Past Commanders-in-Chief, 27; National Officers, 38. That is for a grand total of 13,111. That is a temporary report at this time.

I would like to remind the Department Commander from Indiana, please report to the credentials desk so he can check in and be registered.

Comrade Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, that is our report for today.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you very much. I appreciate your report.

At this time I will call on Past Commander-in-Chief John Mahan for the General Resolutions.

REPORT OF GENERAL RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE (Cont'd.)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MAHAN: Our Committee has one more Resolution given to us, and it is Resolution 310. It has been printed and given to the State Commanders. I will read it. The Spirit of Patriotism Crusade.

"WHEREAS, there is strong evidence that our nation's armed forces are in crisis; and

"WHEREAS, the Department of Defense and the military services appear unable to recruit enough enlistees to satisfy their manpower needs and the retention of skilled personnel is at a dangerous level; and

"WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars whose members have spear-headed every invasion and battle over the past 100 years stands ready to assist in overcoming the difficulties within the military services;

"NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we take the lead in seeking to organize the Spirit of Patriotism Crusade, as presented, a program that will help the services fill their short-term manpower needs and other programs that can permanently solve the manpower needs of the armed forces, and seek the support of the Department of Defense in conducting a great poster and picture campaign."

It was submitted by the Department of New Jersey. The staff recommended rejection. The Committee voted nearly unanimously for rejection for the reason that the VFW teaches patriotism all the time to all people. We always help in the recruitment of people for the armed forces, but it is up

to the Department of Defense to hire people to make posters and to present those posters in the United States. That is not our business, but the business of the Department of Defense. That is the reason why I voted to reject Resolution 310.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Do we have anybody at the microphones that would like to debate this as far as accepting the Resolution? If we do not, then it will die for lack of debate and it will be disapproved.

Microphone No. 1, Microphone No. 2, Microphone No. 3. The Resolution dies for lack of debate. The Committee is released, and thank you so much for the work you have done.

PRESENTATION OF VFW DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL AND CITATION TO RICHARD TROMBLA

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: It gives me a great deal of pleasure to call forth the next guest, a VFW member, Richard L. Trombla of VFW Post 1174, El Dorado, Kansas.

Comrade Trombla has served on the Credentials Committee for over 40 years, and for the past 20 years has been Chairman of the Committee. His hard work and that of his Committee members has contributed to the smooth operation of these VFW conventions. Let me assure you that there is a lot of work, coordination and dedication behind that delegate badge each of you is wearing.

Now, to receive the VFW Distinguished Service Medal and Citation, Richard L. Trombla, Chairman, VFW National Credentials Committee. Comrade Trombla. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The citation reads, "Distinguished Service Medal and this Citation awarded to Richard L. Trombla in sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of over four decades of distinguished and unselfish service to the officers and delegates of the National Conventions as a member of the National Credentials Committee. His long tenure and leadership as Chairman for 20 years reflect great credit upon him and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

"IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 24th day of August, 2000."

It has been signed by John W. Smart, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - RICHARD TROMBLA

COMRADE TROMBLA: Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief and comrades, this is a great day in my life. These last 45 years working on the Credentials Committee have been great. I wouldn't take anything for it and for all the good comrades I have made from coast to coast, and friends in every state of the union.

I want to particularly thank all the Past Commanders-in-Chief and the Quartermasters and Adjutants that allowed me to work for them. It has been a real pleasure in all these 45 years. When Julian Dickinson called me in 1955 to be on this Committee, he said, "Do you want to work on a working Committee?" I didn't know it was going to be that much work. It is more pleasure than it is work, though.

Thank you again, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. It has been a real pleasure all these years to work with all the people in this organization. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF VFW DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL
AND CITATION TO MR. DAVID PETREE

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Our next guest is a real friend of veterans. David L. Petree is the Director of the National Personnel Records Center, the man we turn to when we need a copy of our discharge certificate, our military records or replacements for our medals and decorations. He and his staff in St. Louis do a fine job, and we would like to thank him this morning as he approaches retirement from government service.

Mr. Petree has been the Director of the National Personnel Records Center since 1982; he has spent half of his government career in that position. Prior to the St. Louis assignment, he spent time in the General Services Administration and in several other positions within the National Archives and Records Service, which manages the National Personnel Records Center.

When he retires at the end of this year, he will have completed 36 years of government service, most of it in service to our veterans. Before he leaves, we would like to present him with the VFW Distinguished Service Award and Citation.

Mr. Petree.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: "Distinguished Service Medal and this Citation awarded to David L. Petree in sincere appreciation and grateful recognition for almost four decades of federal civilian service, especially in the field of records management and with the National Archives Records Administration. His dedication to government service in maintaining and providing military documents is testimony to the quality service he provided to America's veterans.

"IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have hereunto set our hand and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 24th day of August, 2000."

This has been signed by John W. Smart, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Mr. Petree, for your comments, sir.

REMARKS - DAVID L. PETREE

MR. PETREE: May I say thank you to Commander-in-Chief Smart and to those here at the front desk, and to the distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen in the audience. It is an honor and a privilege for me as a 36-year civil servant to accept this award.

A few additional thank you's are also in order. First, I would like to thank my friends and supporters at the VFW Headquarters in Kansas City for their 20 years of support. My 20-year association with the Adjutant General's staff has been one of the most rewarding experiences in my federal career.

Secondly, I would like to thank the Veterans Service officers nationwide. There is a group of friends, many of whom work as volunteers, or almost as volunteers, to serve their comrades, continue serving their comrades to ensure that all the benefits they have earned are provided to them. These men and women are some of the most dedicated servants that I have ever worked with in my federal career. I must say that they are unswerving in their task.

For those of us who just hold the documents, they are out there on the front lines dealing with the individuals who need the assistance from their federal government. I have been pleased to associate with these men and women nationwide through our Outreach Program.

I would like to also thank the 500 employees of the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis who have labored through the years, through ups and downs in the federal government, to provide service to the veterans who have earned these benefits. Each year the center responds to one and a half million requests.

In the last 16 months, we have also responded to 170,000 requests for Army awards and decorations, and in the 16-month period we have completed that task. And I am sure some of you out there have been involved in receiving those or acquiring those for your comrades.

Many of those medals are for World War II veterans, described recently as the greatest generation, the greatest generation who changed the scope of the earth in the central event of the 20th Century, who developed the greatest nation on earth, and all of us reaped the benefits for those who fought for us all.

May I finally say thank you to this greatest generation one and all. Thank you very much. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith assumed the Chair.)

PRESENTATION OF THE JAMES C. GATES DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD TO MS. DANNY WRIGHT

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: It is now my

distinct honor to present the prestigious James C. Gates Distinguished Service Award to Ms. Danny L. Wright.

Danny Wright is the manager of Work Source One Stop Center in Fernandina Beach, Florida. Her efforts to promote job opportunities for veterans substantially exceeds that which is required by existing laws and regulations. Because of her devotion to veterans, she performs much of the work herself and is recognized as a strong advocate for veterans.

She is active in the community, networking with the Chamber of Commerce, veterans organizations, the business community and the County Veterans Service Officer.

Under Ms. Wright's direction, seminars on employment for veterans have been conducted on such topics as transition from military to civilian employment, marketing job skills, and resume writing assistance.

Danny Wright is a professional and truly dedicated. She recognizes opportunities to promote employment services for veterans. She has a tremendous admiration and respect for those who served their country and excels in providing quality job placement for veterans.

Comrades, I now present to you an individual whose efforts have enhanced the Veterans Employment Service in the State of Florida, and should set an example to the rest of the nation, Danny L. Wright.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: "James C. Gates Distinguished Service Award presented to Danny L. Wright, Work Source One Stop Center, Fernandina Beach, Florida, in recognition of extraordinary achievement and exceptional leadership in advancing employment opportunities for our nation's veterans and distinguished service in promoting the goals and objectives of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 24th day of August, 2000."

This has been signed by Commander-in-Chief John W. Smart and Adjutant General John J. Senk, Jr.

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Also there is an honorarium of \$1,000.

REMARKS - MS. DANNY WRIGHT

MS. WRIGHT: When Local Post 4351 of Fernandina Beach told me they wanted to nominate me for the award, I was so honored. Just telling me I was being nominated was prize enough for me. It is my pleasure to serve veterans. I come from a family that believes in honoring our country by serving in the military service.

My family members have served in the past century, in World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam and the Gulf War. So, it seems fitting that I would serve in an occupation where I would get to place good people in good jobs and find good jobs for good people. I work with large companies and small companies. Some of them have to offer jobs that are most

desired and have the highest wages. So it is very competitive for those jobs. Often we only have five or six interviews for one opening. Veterans do get preference. Often the veteran is hired for the job.

The military service provides excellent training. They provide good work skills and discipline. As long as the military continues to put good people out in the civilian work force that have good skills, employers will want these workers and it makes my job real easy.

I would like to thank my local Post for its support, and I would like to make a donation to their Building Fund. Thank you.

PRESENTATION OF THE LARGE EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR AWARD

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: The Veterans of Foreign Wars is now honored to bestow its "Large Employer of the Year" award to Comcar Industries, Inc., of Auburndale, Florida.

Comcar sets the standards in the industry for others to emulate by their dedication and hiring practices of veterans. Of the 6,000 current employees of Comcar, 3,156, or 52.6 percent, are veterans. Of the 900 new employees hired last year, 547, or 60.7 percent, are veterans.

To utilize prior military personnel and their experiences, Comcar has established a military specialist position. The sole purpose of this position is to recruit at military installations throughout the world. They have conducted recruitments in Okinawa, Hawaii, Germany, and have obligations in Italy, Spain and England. This has enabled military personnel to ease their transition from military to civilian life.

Comcar is to be commended for its understanding of the needs of veterans and their positive action in training veterans to provide long-term meaningful employment. Accepting this award for Comcar is Ms. Shari Millea, Director of Human Resources. Shari.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: "National Large Employer of the Year Award presented to Comcar Industries, Inc., Auburndale, Florida, in recognition and grateful appreciation for meritorious service in effecting a very comprehensive policy toward the recruitment, employment and promotion of veterans.

"IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 24th day of August, 2000." It has been signed by John W. Smart, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Shari, along with this is an honorarium for \$1,000 to be presented to you.

REMARKS - MS. SHARI MILLEA

MS. MILLEA: Well, I certainly would like to say thank you to the VFW for bestowing this prestigious honor upon our company. We would like to also acknowledge many men and women veterans in our company and

how very, very proud we are that they have chosen Comcar as their employer. They truly are the recipients of this award, not our company.

When we received the state award in Florida a couple of months ago, I said then we did not hire a veteran to receive this honor. We received this honor because we just did what we do every day. We hire the best, most-qualified person for the job, and we feel in many, many instances that is a veteran from serving our country.

When we first received notice that we had received this honor, I received a letter that showed the past honors. My goodness, if that didn't look like a list of who's who in this fine country of prestigious employers. I am sure many of you are sitting out there wondering who and what Comcar Industries is.

I am very proud to tell you that we are the third largest private employer, private trucking company in the United States. We employ many fine women and men veterans to keep our goods moving through this country. We were founded in 1953 by Mr. Guy Bostick, who himself is a Navy Seabee. He exemplifies the work ethic that we are looking for when we employ an employee. Next month, Mr. Bostick will be 80 years old and he still shows up for work every day.

We would like to thank Mr. Ron Kelly, the local veterans representative from the Winter Haven Employment & Opportunity Center, for nominating us for this award. We also would like to thank both Bruce Robinson, Commander of Post 4945, located in Auburndale, Florida, and Leon Campbell of Post 4289, located in Winter Haven, for their letters of support.

I would just like to complete my speech this morning by saying thank you so very much for honoring us. We have a saying in the industry, "If you have got it, a truck brought it." It is our long-standing veterans that are keeping this tradition alive in the United States today. Thank you again. We are so honored. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak assumed the chair.)

PRESENTATION OF THE SMALL EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR AWARD

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: It is now my honor to present the VFW National Small Employer of the Year Award to Physically Challenged Services Industries, Inc., Fort Hood, Texas.

PCSI was established in 1996 in a one-room office in San Antonio, Texas. Its primary goal was to provide job related services to disabled veterans and other disabled individuals.

Today, PCSI has achieved a remarkable rate of hiring veterans, particularly disabled veterans. Of the 41 total employees at PCSI, 36 are veterans, and of that number 31 are disabled veterans. With respect to new hires, 86.5 percent are veterans and 67.5 percent are disabled veterans. PCSI's demonstrated efforts in hiring veterans and disabled veterans clearly identify it as a leader in the small business community that recognizes the con-

tributions made by our nation's veterans.

Accepting the Small Employer of the Year Award is Mr. Ace Burt, President of Physically Challenged Services Industries.

Mr. Burt.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: "National Small Employer of the Year Award presented to Physically Challenged Service Industries, Inc. (PCSI), Copperas Cove, Texas, in recognition and grateful appreciation for meritorious service in effecting a very comprehensive policy toward the recruitment, employment and promotion of veterans.

"IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 24th day of August, 2000."

This has been signed by John W. Smart, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

REMARKS - MR. ACE BURT

MR. BURT: Thank you. I am honored that you have invited me here, and I am pleased to accept this award on behalf of PCSI. I would like to thank Jerry from Fort Hood, Texas, our veterans employee representative, and Mr. John McKinney, from the Department of Labor in the State of Texas, and, of course, the VFW from the State of Texas.

With the help of our veteran employees, PCSI has grown from three employees, when we started this, to over 400 now. Our next goal is I hope one day to be up here to accept this award as the Large Employer of the Year. With the help of our veterans, I am sure we can do that. Thank you and God bless you. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Mr. Burt, there is an honorarium of \$1,000 that also goes along with the award, plus our Commander-in-Chief's medallion.

MR. BURT: Thank you very much.

PRESENTATION OF THE NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OFFICE AWARD

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We are now honored to recognize the Goldsboro Employment Security Commission of Goldsboro, North Carolina, as the recipient of this year's National Employment Service Office Award.

The Goldsboro Employment Security Commission has not only been a leader in providing priority service to veterans but has become a role model for the community. It never misses an opportunity to assist veterans in their quest for good jobs that lead to great careers.

The Goldsboro office has taken a proactive role in the Transition Assistance Program at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base by providing a valuable resource to veterans in preparing for entry into the civilian work force.

In addition to a full range of services from job counseling, case management, job referral, testing and Internet access, the Goldsboro office is a very active participant in assisting homeless veterans.

The dedicated efforts and results of the Goldsboro Employment Security Commission clearly indicate this office has excelled in its service to our veterans.

Here to accept the award is the manager of the Goldsboro Employment Security Commission, William Pate. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: "National Employment Service Office Award presented to Goldsboro Employment Security Commission, Goldsboro, North Carolina, in recognition and appreciation for meritorious professional employment service rendered to veterans.

"IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 24th day of August, 2000."

This has been signed by John W. Smart, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Adjutant General.

REMARKS - MR. JOHN PATE

MR. PATE: First, I would like to thank the VFW for providing us such great accommodations at the hotel. I have truly been treated like a distinguished guest. It occurred to me last night while I was in the hotel room enjoying it, that it was not I who was the distinguished guest, it is you folks out there.

I am honored to be here today to accept this award on behalf of a hard-working team back in Goldsboro, North Carolina. That team of men and women, their hard work and their dedication and their services to the veterans is why I stand up here before you today.

I tell you, as a manager, you are only as good as the team they lead. Folks, they are making me look really good. On behalf of those folks in the Employment Security Commission of North Carolina, we thank you. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Mr. Pate, there is also a \$1,000 honorarium here and our Commander-in-Chief's medallion.

MR. PATE: Thank you very much.

PRESENTATION OF THE VFW OUTSTANDING VA HEALTH-CARE PROVIDER OF THE YEAR AWARD

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: The National Veterans Care Committee of the Veterans of Foreign Wars has established an award to recognize an Outstanding VA Health-Care Provider of the Year. In a nationwide competition that begins at the VFW Post level, the award is presented to a VA employee for providing exemplary service to veterans and their families.

This year's recipient is Mary Chaffee, a registered nurse at the White River Junction VA Medical Center. Ms. Chaffee has been a provider of nursing care to veterans of Vermont and New Hampshire for over 23 years. Through her devotion and compassion to nursing, she is recognized by her patients and co-workers as a sincere and caring person who has earned the respect and admiration of professionals in her field.

Her work with veterans who have been diagnosed with the "Hepatitis C virus" extend beyond the walls of the medical center. This infection is a serious national problem and one that is of major importance because of its prevalence in our veteran population.

With her experience and knowledge of hepatitis, Mary's counsel is sought within VA and the private sector for information and guidance regarding patients with Hepatitis C.

Mary's ongoing contributions include: education of health-care providers, veterans, their families and the public about the Hepatitis C virus.

The development and implementation of local practice protocols for the management of patients with Hepatitis C; and the creation of her Hepatitis C support groups.

Mary exemplifies the title of "nurse" through her caring and compassionate demeanor to patients with a disease that can be potentially life-threatening.

It is with great pride that I present this year's Outstanding VA Health-Care Provider of the Year Award to Ms. Mary Chaffee from the White River Junction, Vermont VA Medical Center. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: "Outstanding VA Health-Care Provider Award, 1999-2000, presented to Mary Chaffee, in special recognition of your individual achievements in support of the programs and purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States as the Outstanding VA Health-Care Provider of the Year.

"IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 24th day of August, 2000."

This has been signed by John W. Smart, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

REMARKS - MS. MARY CHAFFEE

MS. CHAFFEE: My thanks go out to all of you for this prestigious award. It is such an honor to be here in your presence today to receive this. A special thanks goes out to Ira Kudameier, a VFW member from Vermont, for his part in my nomination, and to my family for their ongoing support throughout my career.

My father, a veteran who served during World War II and at Pearl Harbor, would be very proud of me today knowing that I am receiving an award from this organization that he held in such high regard. I have

always wanted to be a nurse since I was a young girl, and now after more than 24 years of taking care of veterans I still want to be a nurse.

Recalling my first day as a new nurse at the VA Hospital in White River Junction, Vermont, I was scared, although maybe not quite as scared as today. But I was anxious to learn and do a good job, and receiving this award today makes me think maybe I have come somewhere close to that goal.

Our veterans deserve access to medical care that is provided in a compassionate, caring and competent manner. It has and will continue to be my goal to try to provide this for them. My veterans have taught me so much throughout the years: honor, loyalty, compassion, camaraderie between each other, hard work, grievance, sadness, perseverance, and so much more.

As our country relies upon the service of our veterans in our times of need, it is my hope that our veterans can rely upon our country in their time of need. Thank you. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF
THE VFW OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY HEALTH-CARE
PROVIDER OF THE YEAR AWARD

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: This year we are honored to present the VFW Outstanding Community Health-Care Provider of the Year Award to Ms. Lorraine Teague of Cambridge, Ohio.

Ms. Teague works for "Hospice of Guernsey, Inc." as a hospice nurse, providing the best patient care at a very critical stage.

With a sunny personality and disposition, she responds to each patient's need in a calm and positive manner. Her actions reflect the compassion she has for her patients.

In an effort to maintain their independence, many of her patients are strongly dependent on her supportiveness. Above and beyond her regular nursing duties, Lorraine helps them by running errands, shopping and other household chores. Her patients indicate she is an important part of their lives and value her visits.

Because many of her patients are veterans, Lorraine is in regular contact with the VA Hospital. She provides weekly reports and notifies them immediately when the veteran's health takes a turn for the worse.

Ms. Teague graduated from Massillon County School of Nursing as a registered nurse in 1983. She worked in a community hospital, a medical clinic and a nursing home before joining Hospice of Guernsey.

I am honored to present this year's VFW Outstanding Community Health-Care Provider of the Year Award to Ms. Lorraine Teague of Cambridge, Ohio. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: "Outstanding Community Health-Care Provider Award, 1999-2000, presented to Lorraine Teague, in special recognition of your individual achievements in support of the programs and pur-

poses of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States as the Outstanding Community Health-Care Provider of the Year.

"IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have hereunto set our hands and the official of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 24th day of August, 2000." This has been signed by John W. Smart, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

REMARKS - MS. LORRAINE TEAGUE

MS. TEAGUE: Thank you very much. I want to thank the VFW for all their wonderful care since we have arrived yesterday. It has been wonderful. I am amazed at the enormousness of all of this. I want to thank you all for such a thoughtful award.

To be recognized in this way, it is difficult because I know there are so many wonderful great care givers out there, such people that I work with at our hospice. They are great people to work with, and I think we do provide a wonderful service.

I would like to also remember my grandma in this award. She was a Ladies Auxiliary member for many years. She passed away this winter, and she would have been very proud of this. I thank you very much for everything. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF THE VFW OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: This is the seventh year that the VFW has presented an award recognizing an individual for their exemplary service as a health-care volunteer.

This year's recipient is Mr. Ronald Olk of Capitol City VFW Post 63 in Boise, Idaho. Mr. Olk serves as a volunteer at the Idaho State Veterans Home. His enthusiasm when volunteering has been an inspiration to many of his fellow veterans, and has encouraged them to do volunteer work, also.

Ron assists on countless activities within the state home. He has organized the therapeutic kitchen and initiates many cooking projects for the sports night activities. He fills in for other volunteers at the canteen so the facility can remain open seven days a week. Many residents of the home consider the canteen the social hub of the home.

Mr. Olk also watches over several veterans who have Alzheimer's disease, ensuring that they are able to leave their units regularly and interact with other residents. This helps to keep them active and stimulates their thought process. He also looks in on them periodically to ensure that their needs are met.

Last but not least, Ron has implemented a hospice program for the veterans and their families at the home. This program provides support and comfort items during the family's time of distress. His VFW Post donated a hospice cart that provides coffee and refreshments for those residing in the

patients' rooms, as well as movies for the patients' families entertainment. Ron remains on duty as long as the family needs him.

I am proud to present this year's VFW Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award to Mr. Ronald Olk of Boise, Idaho.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: "Outstanding Volunteer Award, 1999-2000, presented to Ronald G. Olk in special recognition of your individual achievements in support of the programs and purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States as the Outstanding Volunteer of the Year.

"IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 24th day of August, 2000."

This has been signed by John W. Smart, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

REMARKS - MR. RONALD G. OLK

MR. OLK: I would like to start by thanking my Post for all the help and support they give me at the home. Then Jeannie Basil, who started me off volunteering three and a half years ago. There is just not enough I can say about the folks there.

It is actual veterans there at the home allowing me to do a little something for them that has made it possible for me to get this award. It is an honor to be up here and associated with Post 63, whom not only got three All-American awards this year, but we got this award. It is with great pleasure that I accept this for all the people at the home and the Post. Thank you. (Applause)

NOMINATIONS FOR NATIONAL HOME TRUSTEES

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, the nominations for the National Home Trustees are as follows:

Seventh National Home District, comprised of Michigan, Wisconsin and Iowa, Shirley Tellis, Ladies Auxiliary to VFW Post No. 9127, Des Moines, Iowa, and Ernest E. Meyers, Sr., VFW Post 4090, Portland, Michigan.

The Eleventh National Home District, comprised of Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Utah, Arizona, Alaska and Pacific Areas, Lewie B. Cooper, VFW Post 1174, El Dorado, Kansas, and Leon R. Vileo, VFW Post 9951, Bangkok, Thailand.

Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, I move that the proceedings of the Veterans of Foreign Wars 101st National Convention be submitted to the Speaker of the House for printing as a House document in accordance with Public Law No. 620, 90th Congress, approved October 2, 1968, Title 44, United States Code, Section 1332.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RAY SODEN (Post 2149 - Illinois): I second that motion.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: You have heard, comrades and delegates to this convention, the motion. All those in favor of the motion will signify by saying "aye"; all those that disapprove "nay". The motion is approved.

INTRODUCTION OF PAST COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: It is my privilege at this time to introduce to the delegates at the 101st Convention our Past Commanders-in-Chief. Each of them having served in time of need has brought about many changes in our organization and made it a very much more productive organization that we can be much, much more proud of than we ever could when it was first started.

At this time I will begin with Past Commander-in-Chief Ted C. Connell; Past Commander-in-Chief George R. Cramer; Past Commander-in-Chief James R. Currie; Past Commander-in-Chief Arthur J. Fellwock; Past Commander-in-Chief Walter G. Hogan; Past Commander-in-Chief Allen F. Kent; Past Commander-in-Chief John W. Mahan; Past Commander-in-Chief John E. Moon; Past Commander-in-Chief James E. Nier; Past Commander-in-Chief Clifford G. Olson, Jr.; Past Commander-in-Chief Eric G. Sandstrom; Past Commander-in-Chief R. D. "Bulldog" Smith, Jr.; Past Commander-in-Chief Raymond R. Soden; Past Commander-in-Chief Paul A. Spera; Past Commander-in-Chief Norman G. Staab; Past Commander-in-Chief James L. Kimery.

Are there any Past Commanders-in-Chief in the audience? I don't want to mess this one up. Everybody is here. Please stand, Past Commanders-in-Chief, so we can give proper recognition one more time. (Applause)

RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL SERGEANTS-AT-ARMS

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: My comrades, at this time you see standing behind me our Sergeants-at-Arms. Let me take this opportunity to express my appreciation to a group of comrades that we see annually at our National Conventions. They come to this convention and they are up early in the morning and the first ones in the hall.

They arrange for the seating at the special occasions. They keep order in the hall. They try to seat everybody and maintain order that is necessary during the meeting itself. These folks, believe it or not, don't get a lot of money for what they do. It is obviously a labor of love for them. I am sure that everyone recognizes they do an outstanding job for all of us.

I would like at this time, before I introduce these here, to announce to you that the ones that don't know, there is a familiar face missing. That is Carl Aiello, who has been a long-time Sergeant-at-Arms. Carl, unfortunately, passed away about a month ago. I know that we will all miss him.

Keith McDonald has been a Sergeant-at-Arms for six years and is a member of Post 2275 in California. He is retired from the United States

Navy and he is a Past All American Post Commander.

Dan Sarge Brown is from Post 1911, is from Ohio. He is a Vietnam veteran and retired from the United States Army after 20 years. He has served as a Sergeant-at-Arms for five years. He is employed as an insurance associate and is a Past All American District Commander.

Gary Barringer, Post 9134, has been a Sergeant-at-Arms for five years. He is a Past Department Commander of North Carolina, and he works as a technician for the North Carolina National Guard.

Barry Hoffman, Post 6240 in Kansas, has been a Sergeant-at-arms for 12 years, and when he is not ordering the Sergeants around, he serves as the Commanding Officer of a 700 member National Guard battalion.

The next gentleman is not here this morning with us because he is accompanying the Commander-in-Chief, and for those of you who maybe wonder where the Chief is, he is out visiting the Ladies Auxiliary.

Joe Schirmers has been a Sergeant-at-arms for 38 years. He is a member of Post 4847 in Minnesota. He is retired from the Great Northern Railroad and has over 45,000 hours of volunteer service at VA Hospitals. (Applause)

Joy Collins-Baxter, a Persian Gulf War veteran, is a member of Post 1720 in Minnesota. Joy is the first female appointed to the Sergeants and is a Past District Commander, and is currently the District Quartermaster.

Fred VonHinken is a member of Post 4159, where he has served as a Quartermaster for 34 years. He is retired from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and has been serving as an Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms for 23 years.

These are the comrades that every time something goes wrong, we up here start screaming at them, and I apologize for that. If something goes right, we sometimes forget to say thank you to them. So I want to take this opportunity to publicly say thank you to each and every one of them, the members of this great Sergeants-at-Arms team. (Applause)

I am so proud of each and every one of them. They handle themselves as professionals. I am honored to have the opportunity to serve with each and every one of you. Thanks so much on behalf of all of us for what you do for Veterans of Foreign Wars. Let's give them one more round of applause. (Applause)

WINNERS OF THE NATIONAL BUDDY POPPY CONTEST

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: I call on Tom Kissell, the Director of Buddy Poppy and Member Services, to bring us the Buddy Poppy Contest Awards, and so forth. Please come forward, Tom.

COMRADE KISSELL: Thank you, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. The awards that we will present are the divisional contest awards. It is a national award issued to all those Department Commanders and their Presidents who led each of the nine divisions at the end of the Memorial Day campaign, May 31, 2000, to be awarded to the representatives of those

Departments. Please come forward to accept this award on behalf of your Department from Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak.

The Department of Minnesota and its Ladies Auxiliary Divisional Competition, First Place, Division 1, Representatives of the Department of Minnesota.

Division 2, First Place, the Department of Delaware and its Ladies Auxiliary.

First Place in Division 3, the Department of Missouri and its Ladies Auxiliary.

First Place in Division 4 is the Department of Maine and its Ladies Auxiliary.

The First Place in Division 5 is the Department of Virginia and its Ladies Auxiliary. First Place in Division 6 is the Department of Connecticut and its Ladies Auxiliary.

The First Place in Division 7 is the Department of Idaho and its Ladies Auxiliary.

The First Place in Division 8 is the Department of Utah and its Ladies Auxiliary.

The First Place in Division 9 is the Department of Europe.

Next on the agenda is the award for the Over One Million Club in total distribution of buddy poppies. The Over One Million Club was established a few years ago to pay special recognition to the Departments whose buddy poppy distributions equaled or exceeded one million.

This year, the lone recipient is the Department of California, who led the nation in the distribution of over 1,013,000 poppies. I would ask that the 1999-2000 Department Commander and President of the Ladies Auxiliary, Richard Eubank and Phyllis White from the great Department of California, to be presented at the station for this award. That is Richard Eubank and Phyllis White.

Accepting the award on behalf of the Department of California is the Department Commander.

In closing, it gives me great pleasure to announce the winners of the new Buddy Poppy Contest, Exceeding Sales and Quotas for the Promotion of Buddy Poppy Contest, and although time did not permit us to award individually each of those winners, representing the Ladies Auxiliary and the Department's Chairman from each of these states, it gives me great pleasure to announce the winners of that promotional award.

That award was sent personally with a letter from the Commander-in-Chief from National Headquarters the 1st of August.

From the Department of Alaska, its Ladies Auxiliary, representing the Chairman of the Buddy Poppy Program, Barbara Melnick.

From the Department of Arkansas, Vickie McGahhey.

From the Department of Connecticut, Helen Johnson.

From Delaware, Christine Morrow.

From Georgia, Brenda Bates.

From Idaho, Nancy Vanderhoef.

From Kentucky, Rebecca Totten.
From Maine, Louise Christopher.
From Massachusetts, Lorraine Pritchard.
From Mississippi, Inez Sherwood.
From Missouri, Grace Shockley.
From Montana, Dottie Mason.
From Nevada, Mona Babbitt. From New Mexico, Eloise Parker.
From New York, Jane Reape.
From North Dakota, Phyllis Hagel.
From Oklahoma, Mary Slope.
From Pennsylvania, Helen Kosanovich.
From Tennessee, Gail Anderson.
From Utah, Elizabeth Benson.
From Virginia, Violet Martin.
From Wisconsin, Marie Meyers.
From Wyoming, Gay Baalhorn.

Recognizing the Department Buddy Poppy Chairmen for the Outstanding Buddy Poppy Promotional Award, from the Department of Alaska, Leonard F. Smith.

From Arkansas, Jerry W. Watts.
From Connecticut, Herbert Watson.
From Delaware, Wayne M. McLellan, Sr.
From Europe, Charles D. Short.
From Georgia, Richard Branson.
From Idaho, Daniel K. Johnson.
From Kentucky, Carl J. Kaelin.
From Maine, Gerard T. Morin.
From Massachusetts, David L. Josselyn.
From Mississippi, Bobby G. Sanders.
From Missouri, David J. Morgan.
From Montana, James S. Slaven, II.
From Nevada, Randall S. Reed.
From New Mexico, Eluterioa Garcia.
From New York, Joseph F. Bernstein.
From North Dakota, Wayne L. Paulson.
From Oklahoma, Larry J. King.
From Pennsylvania, Thomas J. Millhouse.
From Tennessee, William A. McNairy.
From Utah, Dennis L. Parizek.
From Virginia, Robert J. Klausung.
From Wisconsin, Leland L. Burnett.
From Wyoming, A. L. Ellefson.

Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, that completes the awards and my announcements.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We have the National Home people being sought out, and what I would like you to do at this time, we will take about 20 minutes so I can get them in here. You know how important it is for that young person to talk to each of you and to get the pins and the money and everything that they get when they come here. Then the nominations will occur after that, after we get the National Home in here.

So, if I could ask you for courtesies as you have done in the past couple of days, I have a quarter after ten, so we are going to please be back here at twenty minutes to eleven. Thank you so much for being so attentive this morning. I see them coming. Please be seated. God shines upon you sometimes, doesn't he?

Let us welcome the Ladies Auxiliary, Madam President Lorraine Frier, accompanied by Mary Smart, the Commander-in-Chief's wife.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, it is all yours.

(Whereupon, Commander-in-Chief Smart assumed the chair at this time.)

INTRODUCTION OF LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT FRIER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Good morning. I will step back just a little bit. Can you hear me back there? It is indeed my honor and I just came from the Ladies meeting, and if she says anything bad about me, disregard it. If she says something good, give me a couple of applause.

Sergeant-at-Arms, do you have that picture? I am in trouble. It is indeed an honor for me to present at this podium a lovely lady that I have had the opportunity to know for probably now around six years, and I think the first time I really met her was back at Gunner Kent's homecoming when we were in Tucson, Arizona, at that time.

I was sitting there with a group of my people from the Eastern States Conference. I think I was probably about a year away from the nominations for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. This lovely lady came up to me and introduced herself to me as Mrs. Lorraine Frier, and I think she was probably Chaplain at the time.

She just wanted to let me know that if I should be fortunate enough to be elected the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief we would be National Commander and National President together. Of course, she put a one final dig in. She said, "Well, John, I want you to know if you are going to be successful in this organization, then you need to listen to me."

We have had a great year. We have made, I think, some necessary changes in our organization. We have talked how well the organization, the Ladies Auxiliary continued to do things for us and the assistance in all our programs. When we had the opportunity to, number one, discuss the possibilities of having Community Service Conference, she said if that is what you think is needed to be successful that we will do it, and we did it.

I think I asked her most importantly what we needed to make the

Political Action Committee successful. I asked her then if she would consider bringing that program back to the Ladies Auxiliary and helping us so that we can support those in Congress that will support veterans' entitlements. I can tell you she didn't hesitate for a moment.

She said, "Commander-in-Chief, if that is what you want, we will make that happen." She made it happen. The success of that program, as the Political Action Committee Director and Chairman reported yesterday, they have raised three dollars to every dollar the men have raised. I say thank you, Madam President.

Comrades, will you, please, give a warm VFW welcome to a lady that I have been so proud to know and she has been an outstanding leader for this Ladies Auxiliary, Mrs. Lorraine Frier. (Applause)

RESPONSE - MS. LORRAINE FRIER

LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT FRIER: Thank you so much, Commander-in-Chief Smart, National Officers and VFW Members. Thank you for this opportunity for one more time I can come to you as a National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

It has been a great year for the Ladies Auxiliary. We topped over \$3 million in donations for cancer research, as you know, for the twelfth year in a row. But it has been an outstanding year for the VFW as well. You have begun a new century of service. I congratulate you all.

This morning I want to thank you for your cooperation on the joint programs. I have teased you all year long, I have not teased you, I have stated the fact, I guess I better say that, that the ladies do 99.9 percent of the work, and I am so glad that you now have achieved yourselves, and give yourselves a pat on the back, because I will admit that the men do 89.7 percent of the work.

I hope you caught the figures. It was still 89 percent. It has been a completely exciting year to see the Operation Uplink come about once again. I have been so proud of the Community Service Conference when my ladies could walk arm in arm with you Commanders down the aisle. It was a dream come true for me and my ladies. I thank you, my "Mr. Wonderful" for making that happen.

We joined you, the Ladies Auxiliary, in supporting the World War II Memorial and we gave \$10,000 the other day, and with your donation of matching funds it was \$15,000 for the World War II Memorial Program. I have to thank you, John, for a wonderful year.

Thank you, comrades, for giving me, and I don't mean any disrespect to you Past Chiefs because you are all very nice men, but I think I got the cream of the crop in my "Mr. Wonderful." I thank all of you for giving me "Mr. Wonderful." I thank the VFW and my "Mr. Wonderful" for giving me this necklace. I will wear it with pride. I thank you very, very much.

Now, "Mr. Wonderful", I am here to present to you a flag set for you to have, and if my Chief of Staff will please come forward. He wanted to

get excited and I told him not to get excited. I know he went to both conventions. He went to the Republican Convention and he went to the Democratic Convention.

I have these on the bed post of my bed, and I gave these to John so he could put this on the bed post of his bed to make sure he knows what his first priorities are to the veterans, need I remind him. However, I could not leave this morning without sharing with you what I shared with the ladies.

I presented this to my "Mr. Wonderful" this morning. When we were on the cruise, my daughter had a wonderful time, and some of you know that she dubbed him the "Big Kahuna." He did not want me to show you these, but I am telling you the devil made me do it.

So to you, "Mr. Wonderful", I want you to see exactly what he does on his after hours. This is what he will be doing after Sunday morning. Isn't this just wonderful, having a "Big Kahuna"?

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Do you want this in the magazine?

LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT FRIER: Absolutely. I think this has to go in the VFW magazine.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you. You did good.

LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT FRIER: I know he is going to get me for this one day. John, once again, to you and to all the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, I thank you immensely for the courtesies extended me and my officers. I thank you very, very deeply from my heart to yours for all that you do for our communities, for our youth, but most importantly for our veterans.

I thank you very, very much and, John, once again I am so proud to have been your President and I thank you from the bottom of my heart. And to all of you line officers and to all the staff in Kansas City, thank you.

Once again, I would like to introduce my Chief of Staff, Elaine Grenz from the great Department of North Dakota, and the best half of "Mr. Wonderful", Mary Smart, "Mrs. Wonderful." Thank you all and God bless and God keep you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, Madam President. As we say, I will figure out something. Comrades in the audience I want to say a few words. You know, when you run for this position you know you will be away from your loved ones back home, your family, and I think any of the Past Chiefs and officers can share with you that many occasions back home when we missed birthdays, anniversaries, grand kids that you miss out on.

I have been blessed for the last three years to have a wife that has allowed me to make a dream come true. That is to serve each and every one of you in this room here today and our 1.9 million members across this country and our overseas Posts, but especially to speak out on behalf of some 25 million veterans who deserve the very best.

I will never, ever be able to thank her enough for allowing me to have the opportunity to represent you as Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. So at this time, to my wife, Mary, I say thank you from the

bottom of my heart for allowing me this opportunity. I know she wants to say a few words to each and every one of you. (Applause)

MRS. MARY SMART: Thank you. To all the comrades, I just want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for taking care of my husband on his travels. I love you all. Thank you.
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Sergeant-at-Arms, will you escort our guests from the audience.

PRESENTATION BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EUROPE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: For a special presentation, George Eby, All American from the Department of Europe.

COMRADE GEORGE EBY: Commander-in-Chief, we here in Europe, over there on the other side, the Eastern Conference in the far East, are presenting a check to go to the VFW National Home for Children of \$1,000. We have a \$1,000 check for the VFW National Home for Children.

This is from the Department of Europe VFW and the Grand of Europe. We are small but we are good, and we always make All American. That is a challenge to all you different Departments. Who gets this check? We finally found him.

COMRADE BENJAMIN PERNOL (National Home President): On behalf of the children at the home, we certainly thank the Department of Europe for their generous donation.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Believe it or not, we are going to do something we have not done all week. We are going to take about a ten or fifteen-minute break in the proceedings until the children from our National Home get here. Stay nearby and be in your seats in about fifteen minutes. Thank you, comrades.

(RECESS.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Comrades, I will call this meeting back to order. Sergeant-at-Arms, will you escort to the podium the National Home Board and our VFW Home children to the podium, please.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Yes, sir. National Assistant Sergeants-at-Arms, escort our distinguished guests.

VISIT OF NATIONAL HOME REPRESENTATIVES

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: One of the proud icons of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and our Ladies Auxiliary is the VFW National Home for Children at Eaton Rapids, Michigan. Now celebrating their 75th year, the National Home is a profound example of veterans helping veterans.

Seventy-five years ago the acreage now containing the latest in educa-

tional and recreational resources was a family farm. Today the home provides comfortable housing and a caring staff designed to give the children a safe, nurturing environment.

This morning, we are honored to welcome the President of the VFW National Home for Children, Benjamin Pernol, the Executive Director Michael Kessler, and the two Buddy Poppy children for 2000, Jennifer and Jessica Wickham. Please welcome them.

(Applause)

REMARKS - MR. MICHAEL KESSLER

MR. MICHAEL KESSLER: Well, good morning. Aren't these wonderful young ladies here? We are all so glad to have you with us here, and we are all so glad to have one of their child care workers, Angela Valeo. Angie is in the back here. She is escorting them from the home. She is a faithful servant at your National Home.

On this, the 75th anniversary year of the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Home for Children, I bring you thanks from the Board of Trustees, the staff at the home, the 90 children, the 27 mothers who live in your wonderful home. Thanks for all the work you have done for the last 75 years.

It seems appropriate that during this anniversary year there has been a great renewal and as a result there has been a great commitment from across this nation back to the National Home. There has definitely been a renewal of vows and commitments, which often happens even on your personal anniversary.

We give special thanks for this last year to you. Many of you have been directly responsible for the needed changes and accomplishments. I give special thanks in memory of Howard Vander Clute for his wise leadership and his personal counsel to me during this transitional year, and I miss him.

I am grateful to Commander-in-Chief John Smart and his staff. Many members of his team and the Commander were at every Board of Trustees meeting. I am thankful to Commander Smart for his unwavering determination to ensure that your National Home serves your veterans, our veterans and families well.

Either Commander-in-Chief Smart or one of his designees was faithful to be at many of not only the Board of Trustees meetings, but at many of the anniversary celebrations during this year.

Next, I am going to move on to a few accomplishments. As a backdrop to this first accomplishment, I want you to know that the National Home staff realize that you never want to be told that your homes are in disrepair and not usable for your veterans' children.

Therefore, I am pleased to announce that in October we met the goal and we had every home occupied on October 31st. Never again will those homes go into disrepair and never again will they sit idle, especially in light of the fact that the articulate Miss America brought to us during this week, and that is there are 10,000 veterans, female veterans, who are homeless.

I wonder how many children are with them.

This last year we served 115 children and 42 parents, the highest number since 1983. This is an 18-percent increase from the previous year. We became an organizational member of the work that Colin Powell is heading up called "The America's Promise, the Alliance for Youth."

As a result, we instituted a Character Counts Program and now teach the character traits that you hold dear, such as responsibility, trustworthiness, fairness, caring, respect, citizenship and patriotism. We strengthened our community service program and as a result these children, and many of the children that they live with in this great community called the National Home, provided 4,500 hours of community service. They are walking in your footsteps. (Applause)

We have sought to bring recognition and honor to the VFW, the Ladies Auxiliary, the MOC and many other supporters and contributors to the home. Part of the way in which we did this is we installed many plaques and signs of acknowledgement throughout the campus.

We want our children at the National Home to know who you are and what you have done. For example, the Administration Building now proudly bears the name Howard E. Vander Clute, Jr. There are many more accomplishments I could speak about.

However, I would be failing if I did not address the fact that this is the 75th Anniversary of your National Home. With that, if we all had a glass to toast, I would ask you to raise it at the end of this, but we don't. So let's do that later.

Here are the words. You can be proud of the fact that over the last 75 years the children and families of our courageous Veterans of Foreign Wars did not get sent to government-run foster care systems where many of your values and ideals are often nonexistent.

I am certain that our fallen veterans and all of you here want much more for our children than what the common American culture has to offer. For we know that as a whole more entertainment, more self-seeking activities to participate in, more spoiled Hollywood idols, as their models, are not needed.

Rather, they need more people like you, both to tell them and to show them what it truly means to be a loyal and patriotic American who is duty-bound and stands ready to sacrifice some of their many pleasures for the good of others. These children are learning those values.

Especially in these times of moral and ethical confusion, many in America are thirsting for what you have offered to the children and families at your National Home during the last 75 years. Fortunately, day after day the ideals that our Veterans of Foreign Wars have so honorably defended are sewn into the impressionable hearts and souls of your veterans' children.

Your comrades' families, your sisters' families still need the National Home, and our American culture desperately needs the values and ideals that are promoted there. So, happy 75th anniversary, and may there be many more. For the sake of our veterans' children and for the sake of the

many youth throughout America who needs your honorable principles to guide them, may God bless you. (Applause)

REMARKS BY THE 2000 BUDDY POPPY CHILDREN

JENNIFER WICKHAM: Hello. My name is Jennifer Wickham. This is my twin sister, Jessica.

JESSICA WICKHAM: I'm the cute one.

JENNIFER WICKHAM: No, I'm the cute one.

JESSICA WICKHAM: We live at the VFW National Home for Children. We live in the Minnesota House.

JENNIFER WICKHAM: We have lived there for two years. We live there with our mother and our little brother, Matthew. Matthew is two and a half years old.

JESSICA WICKHAM: We like living there because we have been able to meet many nice people and make many friends. We have spent time learning about responsibility like keeping our room clean.

JENNIFER WICKHAM: But you don't like to help me keep my room clean.

JESSICA WICKHAM: But I know that I am supposed to and that is what responsibility is.

JENNIFER WICKHAM: You are nuts.

JESSICA WICKHAM: No, I would say I am more like sweet candy.

JENNIFER WICKHAM: Another thing that we have to do at the home is we have to plan and prepare a meal.

JESSICA WICKHAM: Yeah, and she always picks tacos, and I hate tacos.

JENNIFER WICKHAM: We will be in fourth grade this fall.

JESSICA WICKHAM: And I'm the smart one.

JENNIFER WICKHAM: No, Mom says we are both smart.

JESSICA WICKHAM: I love reading and science. I have always been able to read at a much higher grade level than my current grade level. When I started kindergarten, I was able to read at the second grade level.

JENNIFER WICKHAM: I also love reading, art and math. One time I listened to a marathon for St. Jude's Children's Hospital and earned the most for our class, and I won a boom box.

JESSICA WICKHAM: We have been in Girl Scouts since we were in kindergarten. We started out as Daisies, and then we were Brownies for three years, and now we are Juniors.

JENNIFER WICKHAM: We have earned so many patches as Brownies that Mom has a hard time keeping up with sewing them on our vests.

JESSICA WICKHAM: Even though we haven't started the fourth grade, we already have earned patches for our new Junior vest.

JENNIFER WICKHAM: We have attended many Girl Scout camps this summer. My favorite one was "Flying in the Sun."

JESSICA WICKHAM: That was my favorite one, too.

JENNIFER WICKHAM: When I grow up I want to be a teacher and an artist. I want to be a teacher because I like kids and it looks like fun. I admire all my teachers.

JESSICA WICKHAM: I want to be a good lawyer, because I want to help people. I like school, and I know to be a lawyer you have to go to school for a long time. I also want to be the first girl President of the United States of America.

JENNIFER WICKHAM: Our grandfather served in the Navy and we love to hear stories and see his pictures.

JESSICA WICKHAM: Our great-grandfather served in World War II, and he was a Seabee.

JENNIFER WICKHAM: We have done a lot of volunteer work like having food drives at Christmas time, and we like to visit nursing homes.

JESSICA WICKHAM: We also have made valentines for the veterans and planted flowers at the school.

JENNIFER WICKHAM: We feel very honored to have been chosen to be this year's Buddy Poppy.

JESSICA WICKHAM: We love learning as much as we can about veterans, like the really cool planes they flew.

JENNIFER WICKHAM: It is really special to us because they fought for our freedom and we are grateful for that.

JESSICA WICKHAM: We have already had great memories living at the VFW Home, like Santa coming to our house.

JENNIFER WICKHAM: We have been able to take trips, too, like going to Cedar Point. And this year we were finally old enough to ride the roller coasters.

JESSICA WICKHAM: We had an opportunity to go to Minnesota and meet some other people that sponsor our house, and that was fun.

JENNIFER WICKHAM: They took us to see a waterfall and a dam. We went to a cemetery with all the white crosses up for the people who fought in the war, and that was cool.

JESSICA WICKHAM: We want to thank each and every one of you for your support that you have given to the VFW National Home for Children. Because of you a lot of children have had a lot of great memories and many experiences. (Applause)

MR. MICHAEL KESSLER: The girls would like to give some recognition to Wisconsin. They would like a picture with this. There is their cheese block.

JESSICA WICKHAM: Thank you, Wisconsin.

REMARKS AND PRESENTATION BY NATIONAL HOME PRESIDENT

COMRADE BENJAMIN PERNOL (National Home President): Ladies and gentlemen, I am grateful to be the President of the Board of Trustees at the VFW National Home. If you think I am going to try to top that act, you are wrong. What I would like to do is present an award to our Commander-

in-Chief.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, the children, the families and the staff at our VFW National Home, it is a distinct honor for me to present this framed additional Life Membership, and the 75th Anniversary plate to our Commander-in-Chief John Smart for his unwavering support.

Your promotion of unity between the VFW, the Ladies Auxiliary, and the National Home was an instrument which you accomplished many of our missions this past year. It is a pleasure to serve our veterans' children, and thank you and may God bless you, John. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you very much, Ben. And to the National Home, and Mike Kessler, to you, a year ago, I guess, and let me just backtrack for a moment, I also want to thank the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Gwizdak and the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Jim Goldsmith, because they have also made a point to be there.

They want to show their support for that home. I think they have got it on track now. We were concerned we were going to lose that home about a year ago. Under the leadership of Mike Kessler and his dedicated staff, they have turned things around. You all should be very, very proud of the things they are doing at the National Home for the VFW children. I commend you both.

Mike and Ben, if you would come forward, please. This is a small token of my appreciation for your dedication and caring for our children. (Applause)

Again, the girls are going to go through the aisles now. If any of you have pins, please make a donation of one of your state pins to them. The Senior Vice Commander says if you don't have pins and you want to give them money, that is fine. He says thank you.

For a quick announcement, I want to bring to this podium the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Gwizdak.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you, Commander John. Thank you for your kind opportunity for the point of personal privilege here. The other day I received word that a very special person was going to be here because he wanted to be for this occasion that is coming up tomorrow.

I would like to introduce to you Representative Birdsong from Georgia. He has spent 24 years in the House. He is the Chairman of the Defense and Veterans Service Committee. We worked together very hard to get the cemetery in Georgia. I know without his influence and the things that took place in Georgia, I don't think that would have ever come off.

It was quite a surprise and honor for him to come here today. He said he wanted to be here because he wanted to share in the activity tomorrow. Ken Birdsong, will you please stand. Thank you for being here, sir. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, John. For all of those that are going to be making nominations and seconding the nominations of candidates, will you please come to the podium now.

For another special presentation, I want to call on a gentleman who has been elected by the Western Conference to represent this organization as the next Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. Will you please welcome Comrade Ray Sisk to the podium, please.

COMRADE RAY SISK (Department of California): Thank you very much, Chief. Knowing how hard that you have in the past supported Operation Uplink and, of course, our Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Gwizdak and our Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Jim Goldsmith, this has been a labor of love.

It is something that our active duty military really look forward to. We always have a problem raising some money for that. At this time, Chief, I would like to present to you from the Junior Vice Commanders of every Department in our wonderful nation, a total of \$700 that we raised for Operation Uplink.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you very much, Ray. Thank you, Ray, and all the Junior Vice Commanders. Now are you willing to try to double that money right now?

NOMINATION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: We will now go into the nominations for Commander-in-Chief. Nominating the Commander-in-Chief is Past Commander R. D. "Bulldog" Smith.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF R. D. SMITH: I want to apologize to the distinguished Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief that I do have laryngitis and there is something up here that doesn't agree with me, so I will be glad to get out of here and get rid of it.

But at this time, if you will bear with me, I would like to place in nomination our candidate for the office of Commander-in-Chief. Commander-in-Chief, National Officers, Commanders and Comrades all: I have the distinct honor and privilege to stand before you this morning and place in nomination the name of John F. Gwizdak for Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Many of you have already met John as he visited with you in your state or in your Posts. John served our country in the United States Army first as an enlisted man. Is Joe Wood out there? I just can't do it with my voice.

COMRADE JOE WOOD (Department of Georgia): "Commander-in-Chief, National Officers, Commanders and my Comrades:

"I have the distinct honor and high privilege to stand before you this morning and place in nomination the name of John F. Gwizdak for Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Many of you have already met John as he has visited with you in your Posts and in you states.

"John served our country with great, great distinction in the U.S. Army, first as an enlisted man, serving in the European theater, stationed in Germany, and then in Southeast Asia in Vietnam. He served three tours in

Germany, including a rotational tour in Berlin and Vietnam with Company E of the Fourth Battalion of the Twelfth Infantry, 199th Light Infantry Brigade.

"Rising through the ranks, John started out as a heavy motor platoon leader. He eventually assumed the command of Company E. He held the distinction of having served in all leadership positions from squad leader to company commander of this infantry company.

"John was inducted in the United States Army Candidate's School Hall of Fame after 20 years of service, retired as a Captain, receiving the numerous awards and decorations to include the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, four awards with Bronze Stars, including one for valor, the Purple Heart, the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with the Palm Device, the Army Commendation Medals, three, the Army Occupational Medal in Berlin, the Vietnam Campaign and Service Medal, and a Good Conduct Medal three times, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Combat Infantryman's Badge, the Parachutist's Badge and Drill Sergeant Badge.

"Born in Pennsylvania, and later moving to Georgia, thank goodness, John fell in love with a Georgia Peach, who was serving as State President of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Department of Georgia VFW, Betty Burns, and later they married. They have five children.

"John joined the VFW in 1977, and soon became very active. He established a distinctive record of service at the Post, District and Department levels. In 1988, he attained the status of All American Department Commander for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the Department of Georgia.

"Recognized as a leader in veterans affairs, John received numerous appointments to national VFW positions and was elected to the VFW Council of Administration in 1990 representing the great Departments of Georgia and Alabama. In addition to other VFW positions, he served as Adjutant/Quartermaster for the Department of Georgia from December, 1992, to October, 1998.

"It became apparent that John was destined to seek a higher office in the Veterans of Foreign Wars. John was elected at the 99th National Convention by unanimous choice to the office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. His personality and motivational speeches became a great hit with the members of this great organization, and he moved on to the chair of the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief at the 100th Anniversary Convention held in Kansas City.

"John has traveled extensively as a representative of the Veterans of Foreign Wars on several overseas trips in the fall of 1999. John traveled to Europe, received the NATO briefing in Brussels, Belgium, continued over to Germany where he received a briefing from the European Commander of the United States Army forces in Europe.

"John continued to visit Eastern Europe where he visited the U.S. Embassies and military personnel. He received briefings and met with

high-level officials of the United States Government and also officials from the Czech Republic Poland and Russia.

"In December, 1999, John visited the Republic of Korea. With several other VFW officials, he met with the U.S. troops. He toured the joint security area and received an update on the Korean Peninsula issues.

"In March, 2000, he traveled to Southeast Asia on a POW/MIA fact-finding mission. In Laos, the VFW delegation spent three days and four nights in the field of the Joint Task Force Full Accounting Detachment. He lived in the field with the U.S. troops and worked to recover sites that they were searching for the remainder of the U.S. servicemen from the Vietnam War.

"John Gwizdak has been in the national chairs for two years, and now is the time for him to receive the highest one that this organization can offer to a man that is devoted and dedicated to serve so well and will continue to serve this great organization with pride.

"He is not a middle of the roader. He is a man of action. His motto is, 'Follow Me.' So let's elect into office a man who will lead the VFW to greater heights and follow him. I present to you John Gwizdak from the great State of Georgia to be the National Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States." (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: For the purpose of a second, I will call on Richard Branson, the Adjutant-Quartermaster from the Department of Georgia, VFW Post 5080.

COMRADE RICHARD BRANSON (Post 5080 - Georgia): John looked around and saw all these Quartermasters walking up here, and I think he is getting nervous. This is the Southern Conference Quartermasters behind me. Let's give them a hand. (Applause)

Commander-in-Chief, National Officers: It is a distinct honor for me to second the nomination of John F. Gwizdak for the high position of Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. His dynamic leadership has been demonstrated time and time again in all VFW assignments.

His articulate speaking ability clears any doubt in anyone's mind as to what he expects we and the nation to do for our veterans. He is a true ambassador for all efforts regardless of location where he is on assignment. His representation will make all of us proud.

The time is now, and I know that the "Follow Me" theme will be happily practiced by all come tomorrow. Comrades, thank you for your support by ensuring that John is elected Commander-in-Chief to lead this great organization effective tomorrow. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: For the purpose of another second, the Adjutant-Quartermaster from the Department of Louisiana, representing VFW Post 4224.

COMRADE PRECILLA WILKEWITZ (Post 4224 - Louisiana): Thank you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief. I am pleased to second the nomination of John Gwizdak. His "Follow Me" will follow us through the year. John has

been a strong, strong supporter of all veterans.

I am proud and pleased to say that he is very concerned for the women veterans, and I am proud to stand here as a female veteran and second the nomination for John Gwizdak.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Are there any nominations? Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? The nominations will remain open until tomorrow morning.

For the purpose of a nomination for the position of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, I call to the podium George Cramer, representing VFW Post 6869.

NOMINATION OF SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GEORGE CRAMER: Comrade Commander-in-Chief and Delegates at the 101st National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, it is indeed an honor for me to rise and have the opportunity to rise and place in nomination the name of James N. Goldsmith for the high office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the year 2000-2001.

Jim earned his eligibility from the VFW by serving in the U.S. Army from November, 1965, to August, 1967, with duty in Vietnam as an engineer from April, 1966, to August, 1967. He earned and received a Vietnam Campaign Medal, a Vietnam Service Medal, a National Defense Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal and a Rifle Sharp Shooter Medal.

He joined the VFW at Post 5666, in 1967. Jim has been an All-State Post Commander, an All-State and All American District Commander. In 1978, Jim was elected as Michigan's Young Veteran of the Year, and in 1980 he became the first Vietnam veteran to be elected Department Junior Vice Commander.

Subsequently, he got elected through the chairs of the Department of Michigan and earned All-American status as a Department Commander in 1982-83. Jim has served on several National Committees, including Americanism, Youth Activities and Community Service. He has also served as Vice-Chairman of both the POW/MIA Committee, and the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee.

In 1993, he served as Chairman of our all-important National Legislative Committee. At the 100th National Convention, held in Kansas City last year, we elected Jim to serve us as our National Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. While employed at the AC Spark Plug Division of General Motors, Jim was instrumental in establishing Veterans Committee in the UAW Local 651, where he served as the Committee Chairman for over 17 years. He is now retired from General Motors with over 35 years of service.

In addition to his membership in VFW Post 4139 in Michigan, Jim is also a member of the American Legion, the Moose, the Eagles and the

Military Order of the Cootie.

Jim and his wife, Janet, reside in Columbiaville, Michigan, where they have two sons and two grandchildren. It is my distinct honor and pleasure to rise today, as I said before, to place in nomination for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the ensuing year, my friend, James N. Goldsmith, from the great State of Michigan. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: For the purpose of a second, John Harrow, from VFW Post 3724.

COMRADE JOHN HARROW (Post 3724 - Michigan): Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. To the delegates at this National Convention, the 101st Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, I am proud and honored to stand before you this morning to second the nomination of this comrade for the office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

He has served the Veterans of Foreign Wars with distinction in the office of Post Commander to that of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. His concern for his fellow veterans has been his inspiration. His desire to serve the comrades of the greatest veterans organization in the world has motivated him.

His leadership has earned him success at every level he has served. He is uniquely qualified to serve as Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. He has the desire to serve and the vision to lead the Veterans of Foreign Wars into this second century of service begun by Commander-in-Chief John Smart, and he will stand proudly as a member of the team led by John Gwizdak.

When you meet him, you will find a hard-working, dedicated VFW member who serves with honesty and integrity. You will never have any doubts about where he stands, because he has one goal, the betterment of this organization. He shares his views openly and without hesitation.

Because of his ability and our friendship, it is with pride and joy that I second the nomination for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief from the Department of Michigan James N. Goldsmith.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? The nominations will remain open until tomorrow morning.

Now, for the purpose of nominations for the position of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief I call to this podium Past Commander-in-Chief Eric Sandstrom from VFW Post 969.

NOMINATION OF JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ERIC SANDSTROM: Comrade Commander-in-Chief and Delegates to this Great Convention: The Western Conference this year had for candidates running for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. All were well qualified. We picked an outstanding individual from the Golden State of California, Ray Sisk, of Bakersfield.

He is a Navy veteran who got his eligibility through the Armed Forces

Expeditionary Medal. He was born in Arkansas, graduated from schools in California and Oklahoma. He had his own trucking business in Bakersfield, the Sisk Trucking Company.

During the time of the Northridge earthquake, he loaded his trucks with emergency supplies and delivered them to the needy people in Southern California. He has since retired from that company last year, so he has lots of time to be the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

His company was the Employer of the Year in that category for the outstanding help that they gave to the veterans. I will not read all of his qualifications for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, because it will take much longer than my allotted time.

He has served through most of the chairs in his Post No. 97, including All-American Post Commander, All-State District Commander, and All-American Department Commander in 1993-94. He served as a National Council member of District G, California.

One of his many accomplishments, he was the National Veterans Coordinator for the Golden Age Games for three years. It isn't too often that a Marine stands up in front of you and nominations a swabbie. So he must be awfully outstanding, and he certainly is.

It gives me a great deal of honor at this time as a humble Marine to nominate Ray Sisk from the great State of California to be your new Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: For the purpose of a second, I call to the podium Past Commander-in-Chief Norman Staab from VFW Post 6240, Kansas.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NORMAN STAAB: Comrade Commander-in-Chief and comrades of this great organization: I have been accorded the distinct honor of seconding the nomination of Ray Sisk from the State of California for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

No one in my memory has ever brought forth a candidate of a more prestigious background and with VFW experience than Ray Sisk. These accomplishments, to say the least, are extraordinary. Of all of the achievements, none is more elusive and more sought after than the All-American Post Commander status.

Ray Sisk has that award, as you have just heard previously, and many, many others. It is an honor to second the nomination of a truly great American, Ray Sisk.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Are there any other nominations for the position of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Are there any other nominations for the position of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Are there any other nominations for the position of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief? The nominations will remain open until tomorrow morning.

Now, for nominations for the position of Quartermaster General, I bring to the podium Billy McCarthy, VFW Post 864.

NOMINATION OF QUARTERMASTER GENERAL

COMRADE BILLY McCARTHY (Post 864 - Massachusetts): It is my pleasure to nominate for the office of Quartermaster General Joe L. Ridgley. Seconding me after I finish the nomination is the Quartermasters of the four conferences. Joe Ridgley was elected Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars in March, 1995.

Prior to assuming that position, he had served as Assistant Quartermaster General since 1991. He started his employment with our organization in 1976 as an administrative assistant to the Quartermaster General managing the Accounting Department.

He then progressed through our organization and in 1985 he became Director of the VFW Emblem & Supply Department. He served in that capacity for six years. Joe served on active duty with the United States Navy from 1970 to 1975. During his military service, he served three years as a line officer with the Assault Craft Unit 1 including two deployments to Vietnam.

During these deployments, he received the Navy Achievement Medal while serving under combat conditions, as well as the Vietnam Service Medal and the Vietnam Campaign Medal. Following the end of the Vietnam War, he attended the Navy Supply School in Athens, Georgia, and he subsequently served two years as supply and disbursing officer aboard the USS Schenectady LST 1185, receiving a Letter of Commendation during his service.

After he left the service, he obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from the University of Missouri in 1970, majoring in accounting. He also attended the Graduate School of Business at the University of Missouri, Kansas City, concentrating on Financial Management.

He is a Life Member of VFW Post 8220, Belton, Missouri. Joe is also a member of the Board of Trustees of the Liberty Memorial World War I Museum in Kansas City, a licensed real estate broker and an auctioneer. He and his wife, Judy, have two children, a son, Jade, and a daughter, Jessica, who is a graduate of the Naval Academy and now serving on the Guided Missile Cruiser USS Lady Bay.

He lives, and this is the truth, in Peculiar, Missouri. Again, it is an honor for me to nominate Joe Ridgley for Quartermaster General.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: For the purpose of seconding the nomination, I call on Stan King, from the Department of Massachusetts, Department Quartermaster, representing VFW Post 2346.

COMRADE STAN KING (Post 2346 - Massachusetts): Good morning, comrades. I stand before you a very humbled and honored comrade to have been given the opportunity to be representing Larry Danielson, Adjutant-Quartermaster from Wisconsin, Precilla Wilkewitz, Adjutant-Quartermaster from Louisiana, and Darrell Bencken, Adjutant-Quartermaster from Kansas.

We collectively second the nomination of a great Navy veteran, a true friend who has served our National Organization as our Quartermaster General. We have known Joe for a number of years. We are very proud of his record and his ability to serve all of us in that position.

To expedite the nomination process, we are very honored to second the nomination of Joe L. Ridgley for Quartermaster General for the year 2000-2001.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Are there any other nominations for the office of Quartermaster General? Are there any other nominations for the office of Quartermaster General? Are there any other nominations for the office of Quartermaster General? If not, the office will remain open until tomorrow morning.

We will now have nominations for the position of Judge Advocate General. The nomination will be by Fred Weigel of VFW Post 6240.

NOMINATION OF JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL

COMRADE FRED WEIGEL (Post 6240 - Kansas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, National Officers, Comrades and Delegates to this Convention: Lynn Hall, retired from the United States Navy Submarine Force in 1975, with the rank of Chief Warrant Office W-3.

In 1976, he was elected District Magistrate Judge. This judicial position had jurisdiction over the entire State of Kansas. One year into his second term of office, he was elected President of the Kansas District Judges Association. His traditional duties included traffic cases, juvenile adoptions, marriage ceremonies, civil and small claims, felony preliminary hearings and jury trials. In addition, he was also the Municipal Court Judge in Russell and Lucas, Kansas, for nearly 15 years.

His VFW experience includes being an All-State Post Commander, a 100 percent District Commander. He also served as the Department Judge Advocate for six years and was also an All American State Commander. He was appointed by the Commander-in-Chief as Parliamentarian at the National Convention in Louisville and also has served as Parliamentarian for the Western Conference. He just completed his term as Chairman of the Western Conference.

His qualifications are without peer. It is a privilege and a pleasure for me to nominate Comrade Lynn Hall for Judge Advocate General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the ensuing year. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: For the purpose of a second of this nomination, I call on Lewie Cooper from VFW Post 1174.

COMRADE LEWIE COOPER (Post 1174 - Kansas): Commander-in-Chief, National Officers and Comrades: It gives me a great deal of pleasure, and it is indeed a privilege for me to second the nomination of my friend and comrade, Lynn Hall, for the office of National Judge Advocate General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the ensuing year.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Is Lynn Hall in the audience? Well, is there any other nominations for the position of Judge Advocate General? Are there any other nominations for the position of Judge Advocate General? Is there any other nominations for the position of Judge Advocate General? If not, the nominations will remain open until tomorrow morning.

For the purpose of a nomination for Surgeon General, here to make a nomination is Ray Soden, Past Commander-in-Chief of VFW Post 2149.

NOMINATION OF SURGEON GENERAL

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RAY SODEN: Thank you, Chief. It is indeed an honor for me to appear before you, the delegates, today to nominate for Surgeon General an outstanding individual, a comrade who has served this organization as Surgeon General on two previous occasions.

He serves on his Post level, he has served the Department of Illinois for 17 years as the Surgeon. He is held in very high esteem by his peers and one of the greatest orthopedic surgeons in this country. He has dedicated himself and has worked very closely with comrades on the Post level. Any time anybody has an ache or pain, Doc always takes the time to listen and to give advice and direction. He never sends a bill.

With that, it is indeed an honor for the Department of Illinois, the Big Ten Conference, to place in nomination the name of Dr. Raymond Schlueter for Surgeon General for the ensuing term of the year 2000-2001.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: For the purpose of a second of this nomination, I call on Charlie Brim from VFW Post 6366.

COMRADE CHARLIE BRIM (Post 6366 - Illinois): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Officers and Delegates to the 101st Convention: It is a pleasure to be up here to second the nomination of Dr. Schlueter for the office of Surgeon General of this great Department.

He has served the Department of Illinois well in the last years that he has been the surgeon for the Department of Illinois, and he has served the National Organization well when he was here for two previous terms surgeon. I second the nomination of Dr. Raymond Schlueter for Surgeon General. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Are there any other nominations for the position of Surgeon General? Are there any other nominations for the position of Surgeon General? Are there any other nominations for the position of Surgeon General? If not, the nominations will remain open until tomorrow morning.

Just for your point of information, he had an emergency call and that is why he is not on the podium right at this second.

For the position of National Chaplain, I call to the podium Past Commander-in-Chief Clifford G. Olson from VFW Post 8699.

NOMINATION OF NATIONAL CHAPLAIN

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CLIFFORD OLSON: Commander-in-Chief Smart, National Officers, Comrades and Delegates to the 101st National Convention. The few times that I have been before you when I have had the pleasure of nominating or seconding the nomination of National Officers, I have stated that I would never nominate or second anyone who I was not very sure would do a fine job if and when elected.

This is a function which I take very seriously and with great pride. This applies to the comrade which I am about to nominate. The comrade I am about to nominate is indeed one of the finest men that I know, a man that has the respect of many.

His record bespeaks of his care and his concern, not only for veterans and their families, but for people in all walks of life. He is active in his home diocese in Massachusetts as the Vicar. He serves on the Pre-Senate of Massachusetts, the Matrimonial Board.

He is involved greatly in Project Rachel, and is truly active in the many ecumenical activities within his area. My friends, he presently serves as a Pastor of St. Ann's Parish in West Newbury, Massachusetts. He is a Vietnam veteran, serving with the U.S. Air Force in Vietnam in 1962 through '67.

He is a member of Post 639 in Malden, Massachusetts, and has served as its Post Chaplain for 25 years. He has been the VFW State Chaplain for a total of 25 years for the Department of Massachusetts.

He is a member of the American Legion and he is a member of Am-Vets. He is also the Chaplain of the Homeless Veterans Shelter in Boston, Massachusetts.

My comrades, this comrade is a people's priest, a serviceman's chaplain, a great personal friend to many people. He is our spiritual advisor, a healer of souls, the person we look to for inspirational guidance. This comrade was the first Vietnam veteran elected to a VFW National office when he served as our National Chaplain in 1967 and 1968.

It is with great pride that I place in nomination for the office of National Chaplain for the year 2000-2001 the name of a dear friend and comrade, from the Department of Massachusetts, Reverend Father John F. Leonard.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: For the purpose of seconding this nomination, I call to the podium Billy McCarthy, representing VFW Post 864.

COMRADE BILLY MCCARTHY (Post 864 - Massachusetts): It is with pleasure that I second the nomination of one of the finest persons that I have ever met, Father John Leonard. Father Leonard is an inspiration to us all. On a selfish reason, one of the reasons I am seconding the nomination, I think that I need all the help I can get to either get up there or wherever I am going to go. So that is why I am seconding the nomination.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: For the purpose of seconding the nomination, I call to the podium the State Commander of Massachusetts, Richard Denoyer, from VFW Post 1012.

COMRADE RICHARD DENOYER (Post 1012 - Massachusetts): Comrade Commander-in-Chief Smart, National Officers, Fellow Comrades and Delegates of the 101st Convention: I rise before you to second the nomination for the office of National Chaplain of a fellow veteran that has been a part of the Massachusetts Veterans of Foreign Wars for more than 28 years, having joined Post 639 in Malden, Massachusetts, in 1972.

A Roman Catholic Priest for over 46 years, he earned his eligibility for membership by serving two tours of duty in the Republic of South Vietnam, first in 1962 and the second in 1966. During these tours as an Air Force Chaplain, it was not unusual for this individual to serve mass offering spiritual guidance as many as twelve times each Sunday, not only at air bases but at the Army, Navy and Marine Combat Outposts as well.

This man of the cloth has also extensive VFW experience. He has the honor of previously serving as the National Chaplain in 1976-1977, and has served as State Chaplain for the Department of Massachusetts more than 25 years, as well as Post Chaplain from Malden Post 639 equally as long.

Not only a priest's priest, he is also a veterans' veteran. A true man of the cloth, he reaches out to all veterans and non-veterans alike, offering valuable spiritual guidance and advice. He has devoted his life to God and much of his knowledgeable time to our veterans.

My fellow comrades, it is my great pleasure and distinct honor and unique privilege to second the nomination of Father John F. Leonard, State Chaplain from the great Department of Massachusetts, for the office of National Chaplain 2000-2001. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Are there any other nominations for the position of National Chaplain? Are there any other nominations for the position of National Chaplain? Are there any other nominations for the position of National Chaplain? If not, nominations will remain open until tomorrow morning.

Are there any comments or announcements? Sergeant-at-Arms, prepare the room for the Closing Ceremonies.

(Whereupon, the Salute to the Colors were given followed by the Prayer by National Chaplain Vogler.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Closing Ceremonies for today's Business Session have been performed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you for your service here today, my comrades. The meeting is closed until the Installation of Officers tomorrow at 9:00 a.m.

(Whereupon, the meeting was recessed at 11:55 o'clock a.m.)

FOURTH BUSINESS SESSION FRIDAY MORNING, AUGUST 25, 2000

(The Fourth Business Session of the 101st National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, was called to order in the

Midwest Express Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, at 9:00 o'clock a.m.,
Commander-in-Chief John W. Smart, presiding.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Sergeant-at-Arms, prepare the room for the Opening Ceremonies.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Yes, sir, Commander-in-Chief. (Whereupon, National Sergeant-at-Arms Barry Hoffman led the Convention in the Salute to the Colors. The Prayer was given by Reverend Vogler, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the opening ceremonies for today's business session for the installation of officers have been performed, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you. You will resume your station. Let's thank the Sergeants-at-Arms for an outstanding job all week for me at this convention. (Applause)

At this time I am going to call for the final report of the Credentials Committee. I call to the podium Richard Trombla, Chairman of the Committee.

FINAL REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMRADE RICHARD TROMBLA (Post 1174 - Kansas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief and comrades, This is the Final Report of the Credentials Committee. I am Richard Trombla, Chairman of the Credentials Committee, Post 1174, Department of Kansas. The credentials closed at 12:00 o'clock yesterday. This is the final report.

Total delegates, 13,090; Department Commanders, 53; Past Commanders-in-Chief, 27; National Officers, 38. That is for a grand total of 13,208.

Commander-in-Chief, this being the final report, this Committee would like to thank you for the honor of serving you and ask that you dismiss us at this time. That is my final answer. (Laughter)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: We need to thank this gentleman. He has been doing this job for over 40 years, and this is his last convention as Chairman of this Committee. We thank you so very, very much. (Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: At this time I want to introduce the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Elwood B. Rickards.

COMRADE ELWOOD RICKARDS (Post 7234 - Delaware): Thank you, comrades. It has been a great pleasure for me to serve on this Committee for the last few years with Dick. We both joined at the same time and we are both Past State Commanders in the same year. It has been an honor for me to serve with him all these years. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Is there any other business to come

before this convention? Is there any other business to come before this convention? If not, we will go into the Election of Officers.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Yesterday nominated for the office of Commander-in-Chief was John F. Gwizdak from Post 5080 in Georgia. Is there any other nomination? Is there any other nomination? Is there any other nomination?

COMRADE RICHARD RANSOM (Post 58 - Georgia): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Richard Ransom, delegate from Post 58 of Lake City, Georgia. I move the nominations for Commander-in-Chief for the year 2000-2001 be closed at this time.

COMRADE FRED ENGLEHARDT (Post 2518 - Georgia): Commander-in-Chief, Fred Englehardt, from Post 2518, St. Mary's Georgia. I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Any discussion? Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor will signify by saying "aye"; opposed. The motion is carried. I will present to you the Commander-in-Chief-Elect John F. Gwizdak. (Applause) I will call for the Adjutant General to now cast the ballot for John Gwizdak for Commander-in-Chief.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. As the Adjutant General, I am extremely proud to cast one ballot for the unanimous selection of John F. Gwizdak to the high office of Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Commander-in-Chief-Elect, please come to the podium. I am proud to present you with your Commander-in-Chief lapel pin. I will ask Betty to come forward at this time and present you with your cap. (Applause)

Nominations are now open for the position of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. Nominated yesterday was James N. Goldsmith from VFW Post 4139, from the great State of Michigan. Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations?

COMRADE RON AMEND (Post 7486 - Michigan): I move that the nominations be closed and the Adjutant General cast one unanimous ballot for James N. Goldsmith as Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. (Applause)

COMRADE BARRY WALTER (Post 4005 - Michigan): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: All in favor of electing James Goldsmith to the office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed. The motion is carried. I will call on the Adjutant General at this time.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, as Adjutant General I am proud to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of James N. Goldsmith for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. (Applause)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade, Senior Vice Commander-

in-Chief, let me have the honor of escorting you, your wife and delegation around the hall.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Will the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief-Elect come forward and the Commander-in-Chief-Elect will present him with his lapel pin.

Nominations are now open for the office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. Nominated yesterday was Raymond C. Sisk from VFW Post 9791, from the great State of California. Is there any other nomination? Is there any other nomination? Is there any other nomination?

COMRADE ART HARRIS (Post 5179 - California): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move that the nominations be closed and we cast one unanimous ballot for the next Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Ray Sisk, Department of California.

COMRADE RICHARD EUBANK (Post 85 - California): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: You have heard the motion before you. All in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed. The motion is carried. I now will present to you the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief-Elect Ray Sisk from the great State of California. Adjutant General, cast the ballot.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I have the privilege to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of Raymond C. Sisk for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, let me have the honor of escorting you, your wife and delegation around the hall.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: I will now ask Joan, the wife of the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, to come forward and present him with his cap. The Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief-Elect will present you with your Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief's lapel pin.

We will now open up nominations for the office of Quartermaster General. Yesterday nominated for this position was Joe L. Ridgley from VFW Post 820 in Missouri. Is there any other nomination? Is there any other nomination? Is there any other nomination?

COMRADE JERRY TURK (Post 2426 - Missouri): Commander-in-Chief, I move that nominations for the office of Quartermaster General be closed and the Adjutant General be instructed to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of Joe L. Ridgley for the high office of Quartermaster General.

COMRADE JIM MUELLER (Post 5077 - Missouri): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: You have heard the motion before you. Is there any discussion? No discussion. All in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed. The motion is carried. I will now instruct the Adjutant General to cast one unanimous ballot for Joe L. Ridgley.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, as Adjutant General I am pleased to cast one unanimous ballot for the elec-

tion of Joe L. Ridgley for Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Quartermaster-Elect, may the Sergeants and I have the distinct honor of escorting you around the hall.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: At this time I call Judy to the podium to present the Quartermaster General with his VFW cap. Joe, you could run for President of the United States with a smooch like that.

Yesterday we had nominations for the position of Judge Advocate General. Nominated at yesterday's meeting was Lynn Hall from VFW Post 6240, Kansas. Is there any other nomination? Is there any other nomination? Is there any other nomination?

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE TOM SANKO (Post 1714 - Kansas): Commander-in-Chief, I make a motion to close the nominations for Judge Advocate General and cast one unanimous ballot by the Adjutant General.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE JEFFERSON LAWSON (Post 6654 - Kansas): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: You have heard the motion before you. All in favor, signify by saying "aye"; all opposed. The motion so carried, and I now instruct the Adjutant General to cast one vote for Lynn Hall for Judge Advocate General.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Commander-in-Chief, as Adjutant General, I am proud to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of Lynn Hall for Judge Advocate General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: I will call to the podium right now Betty to present the Judge Advocate General of the VFW with his cap.

Nominations are now open for the office of National Surgeon. Nominated yesterday was Dr. Raymond Schlueter from VFW Post 6869, Illinois. Is there any other nomination? Is there any other nomination? Is there any other nomination?

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE JOHN FARR (Post 367 - Illinois): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move we close the nominations and instruct the Adjutant General to cast one unanimous ballot for the office of Surgeon General for Dr. Raymond Schlueter.

COMRADE RICK FRANK (Post 1481 - Illinois): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: You have heard the motion before you. All in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed. The motion is carried. I will instruct the Adjutant General to cast one unanimous ballot.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Commander-in-Chief, I am proud to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of Dr. Raymond W. Schlueter for Surgeon General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade National Surgeon, let me

have the honor of escorting you, your wife and delegation around the hall.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: At this time I will call on Mrs. Schlueter for the cap presentation.

Nominations are now open for National Chaplain. Nominated yesterday was Monsignor John F. Leonard from VFW Post 639. Is there any other nomination? Is there any other nomination? Is there any other nomination?

Microphone No. 2.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF PAUL SPERA: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Paul Spera, a delegate from Post 144, Boston, Massachusetts. I move that the nominations be closed and the Adjutant General be instructed to cast one ballot for the election of Father John Leonard as the National Chaplain.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE TED EATON (Post 2104 - Massachusetts): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I proudly second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: You have heard the motion before you. All in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed. The motion carried. I now instruct the Adjutant General to cast one unanimous ballot for John Leonard.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Commander-in-Chief, as Adjutant General I am pleased to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of Monsignor John F. Leonard for National Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade National Chaplain, I would like to take you, your wife and your delegation around the hall floor. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: We need to make a slight correction on the announcement that was just made. I don't know why everybody is laughing. Indeed, to present the cap to our National Chaplain, the Monsignor John F. Leonard, is his sister, Donna Brennan.

At this time I call for the announcement of the National Council-Elect members by Adjutant General John Senk.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF COUNCIL MEMBERS-ELECT

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: At this time, the Commander-in-Chief-Elect will present the incoming Council members with their caps. Sergeant-at-Arms, please present the Commander-in-Chief-Elect for presentation of the caps.

Representing Council District No. 2, Vermont and Massachusetts, William L. McCarthy, Post 864.

Representing Council District No. 4, District of Columbia, Delaware and Europe, Robert A. McGowan, Post 3227.

Representing Council District No. 6, Virginia and West Virginia, Robert B. Kessling, Post 573.

Representing Council District No. 8, Georgia and Alabama, Charles

Stephens, Post 3128.

Representing Council District No. 10, Oklahoma and Arkansas, Bobby G. Julian, Post 6527.

Representing Council District No. 12, South Dakota, North Dakota and Wyoming, A. L. Ellefson, Post 8473.

Representing Council District No. 14, Montana, Washington and Idaho, Donald G. Riegel, Post 889.

Representing Council District No. 16, Latin America, Caribbean, Pacific Areas, Alaska and Hawaii, Marcus S. Butler, Post 10252.

Representing Council District No. 18, Connecticut and Rhode Island, Salvatore J. Capirchio, Post 2396.

Representing District D, Ohio, George H. Cox, Post 6772.

Representing District E, Minnesota, David L. Adams, Post 1782.

Representing District H, Texas, William D. Bell, Post 6873.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: I would like to offer my congratulations to all those duly-elected Council members on their election.

At this time for the purpose of Announcement of Appointments, I recognize the Commander-in-Chief-Elect John F. Gwizdak.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF APPOINTMENTS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT GWIZDAK: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. Thank you all. Comrades, sisters and friends, it is indeed an honor for me this morning to make the following appointments:

For Adjutant General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, John J. Senk, Jr.

For National Chief of Staff, from Post 58, Georgia, Richard Branson. With special pride this morning, for Inspector General, Precilla Wilkewitz, from Post 4224 in Louisiana.

For Sergeant-at-Arms, from Post 6240 in Kansas, Barry Hoffman.

At this time I would like to give the opportunity to the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief-Elect for brief remarks.

REMARKS BY SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT GOLDSMITH: Before I make my remarks, we had a meeting with the Senior Vice Commanders and Department Commanders, and we gave the other day a total of \$520 towards Operation Uplink. Well, the Junior Vice Commanders of the Departments beat us.

So today, on behalf of the Senior Vice Commanders, Quartermaster General, I have \$354, and that brings our total up to \$874 from our Senior Vice Commanders. What I ought to do is I ought to relinquish this chair to our Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief-Elect, because I know he is going to beat me, and it will upset me greatly.

Let me say greetings, and I stand before you this morning a very humble man. A year ago you gave me an opportunity to serve this great organization as the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. I think I have done a halfway decent job, and I thank you for the opportunity to serve this organization as the senior partner in the Gwizdak, Goldsmith, Sisk team.

I certainly want to recognize the Department of Michigan, what is left of them, and do not take offense to it. They are over there. As many of you might know, we have the National President from the Department of Michigan, Pat Jankowski, being sworn in today as the National President.

I want to take this opportunity to thank John Smart and his staff of officers for the tremendous treatment, the kindness and respect that they have given Jan and myself over the last year. John, thank you for a great year. But most of all, to you and Mary, thank you for your friendship.

At this time I would be remiss if I did not introduce a couple of special people that I have here with me today. I would like to introduce my sister Barbara, and her husband, Joe Appleby. My brother, David, and, of course, the one that all of you spoil so much, my wife, Janet.

To John Gwizdak, John, we are going to have a tremendous year. I can assure you that my agenda, and my only agenda for this year, is to make sure that the Veterans of Foreign Wars has the best year that we possibly can as we follow in the footsteps of John Smart.

To you, John, I pledge that to you. Good luck and we are going to go places this year. As I said before, success breeds more success. Failure breeds failure. This organization is alive, it is well, and it is breathing. Thank you and God bless each and every one of you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT GWIZDAK: For the opportunity at this time for his remarks, the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief designee, Ray Sisk from California.

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: Thank you very much, Chief, and most assuredly we need to pass down to Joe enough money to pass our Senior Vice Commanders-in-Chief. Yesterday the Junior Vice Commanders-in-Chief donated \$700, and we are happy to donate a couple of more today to pass them.

It is certainly a great, great pleasure for me to stand before you today as your incoming Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. There are a lot of people to thank for that. The most important person in my life, and the only thing that could probably stop me from attending a VFW function would be her illness or something like that, is my lovely wife, Joan, and the love of my life.

Certainly, to my Post 9791 in California, to the California delegation, most of you know that California doesn't get solid very often, but this is one year we were solid as a rock. I need to thank my campaign treasurer, probably one of the best friends that I have ever had in my life, Roland Joe Valesquez over there.

Certainly, to our last year's Commander, Dick Eubank, thank you. And

to our present Commander, California had an All American year.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief-Elect, let me assure you that California is going for an All American trip with you again this year. I will assure you of that. They told me to keep these brief and I am going to. I just want to thank everyone in here, in particular the Western Conference states, for the very great election that they did for me last Sunday.

We had some wonderful candidates running for that position. I am very thankful to be your representative from the Western Conference. I thank all of you from the Western Conference for this position. Let me assure you that my next three years is going to be a teamwork year.

There is not anything that our Commander-in-Chief and our Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief-Elect is going to ask me that I am going to deny him.

I want you to know that I am a team player. I fully intend to be a part of the Gwizdak, Goldsmith, Sisk team.

I want you to all know that I love you all. You are great, great friends, and I appreciate everything that you do for our veterans every day of your lives. I thank you for it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: The moment I have been waiting for is indeed an honor to present to you the Installing Officer for the 2000-2001 team. The Sergeant-at-Arms will please escort Past Commander-in-Chief John Carney to the station, please.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Yes, sir.

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: I have the distinct honor of presenting to you our Installing Officer for the 101st National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Past Commander-in-Chief John M. Carney.

INSTALLING OFFICER CARNEY: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the term for which you and your subordinate officers were elected or appointed has now expired. Before we proceed with the installation ceremony, I must ascertain the following. Have the officers for the ensuing year been duly elected?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: They have.

INSTALLING OFFICER CARNEY: Have the books of the Adjutant General and Quartermaster General been examined and approved by the National Council of Administration?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: They have.

INSTALLING OFFICER CARNEY: Does the Adjutant General have on file proof of eligibility of all the officers to be installed during this installation?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: He has.

INSTALLING OFFICER CARNEY: I would remind any officer not having proof of eligibility on file and not being installed at this time, the by-laws prescribe that you must within sixty days of election or appointment submit to the Adjutant General for his file a copy of eligibility.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, are the funds in the hands of the Quartermaster General ready to be turned over to his successor when duly installed?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: They are.

INSTALLING OFFICER CARNEY: Have you the charter in your possession?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: I have.

INSTALLING OFFICER CARNEY: You will now give the gavel to me. Now, Past Commander-in-Chief John W. Smart, you have been relieved of your duties as Commander-in-Chief of this organization. It is proper to remind you that in assuming the chair of Past Commander-in-Chief it will be your duty and privilege to counsel and otherwise assist your successor through the experiences that you may have gained during your term of office. You will now station myself at my right, please.

National Sergeant-at-Arms, you will now present the officers-elect at the alter as the Adjutant General reads the list of officers to be installed. I will take personal note that the Commander-in-Chief will take the Oath of Office with the rest of the Council of Administration as well as his own oath.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Yes, sir.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The officers are as follows:

Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief	-	James N. Goldsmith
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief	-	Raymond C. Sisk
Quartermaster General	-	Joe L. Ridgley
Judge Advocate General	-	A. Lynn Hall
Surgeon General	-	Dr. Raymond W. Schlueter
National Chaplain	-	Monsignor John Leonard
Council District No. 1	-	Donald W. Linscott, Jr
Council District No. 2	-	William L. McCarthy
Council District No. 3	-	William Goode
Council District No. 4	-	Robert A. McGowan
Council District No. 5	-	Omar F. Kendall
Council District No. 6	-	Robert B. Kessling
Council District No. 7	-	John Furgess
Council District No. 8	-	Charles R. Stephens
Council District No. 9	-	William J. Jolin
Council District No. 10	-	Bobby G. Julian
Council District No. 11	-	Curt J. Taylor
Council District No. 12	-	Al Ellefson
Council District No. 13	-	Billy C. Smith
Council District No. 14	-	Donald G. Riegel
Council District No. 15	-	Vincent J. Mitchell
Council District No. 16	-	Marcus S. Butler
Council District No. 17	-	Charles D. Fuller
Council District No. 18	-	Salvatore J. Capirchio
Council District No. 19	-	W. Hugh Long

District No. A	-	Allen Q. Jones
District No. B	-	Clyde F. Davis, Jr.
District No. C	-	George S. Smith
District No. D	-	George H. Cox
District No. E	-	David L. Adams
District No. G	-	Robert J. Maxwell
District No. H	-	William D. Bell
District No. J	-	Robert M. Sprute
Past Commander-in-Chief	-	John W. Smart
Adjutant General	-	John J. Senk, Jr.

The Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the year 2000-2001, John F. Gwizdak.

INSTALLING OFFICER CARNEY: Let's hear it again for our Commander-in-Chief John F. Gwizdak. (Applause)

Will you remain standing, please. National Officers-Elect of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I will now administer to you your Officers' Obligation.

You will raise your right hand, touch the flag of your country with your left hand and touch the shoulder of a comrade next to you and repeat after me. (Whereupon, the following Officers' Obligation was given at this time:

"I do hereby solemnly promise that I will faithfully discharge to the best of my ability the duties of the office to which I have been elected or appointed, according to the Constitution, By-Laws and Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. I solemnly promise that at the close of the term to which I have been elected or appointed, I will surrender immediately to only the duly authorized person or persons, all records, money, or other properties of this organization in my possession or under my control. All this I freely promise, upon my honor, as a loyal citizen of our great Republic. So help me God.")

INSTALLING OFFICER CARNEY: As you were.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN VOGLER: Let us uncover and bow our heads. Almighty God, our guide and our divine protector, give thy blessings upon these, our comrades, who now become National Officers. We beseech you, O Lord, to be ever present amongst us and to grant wisdom unto them so that in their given deliberations they may continue to favor you and glorify our country and to better our organization.

May thy strength sustain them and may thy power preserve them, and may your hand protect them in the faithful and fruitful performance of all of their duties. Amen.

INSTALLING OFFICER CARNEY: The audience may be seated. National Sergeant-at-Arms, you will now escort the officers to their respective station.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Yes, sir, Comrade Installing Officer. Comrade Commander-in-Chief-Elect, I request permission and the privilege to escort you to your station, sir. Sergeants-at-Arms, bring the other Chair

Officers forward.

Comrade Past Commander-in-Chief and Installing Officer for the 101st Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I have the distinct honor this morning to present to you our new Commander-in-Chief-Elect John F. Gwizdak from the beautiful and sovereign state of Georgia.

INSTALLING OFFICER CARNEY: National Officers of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, you now occupy the position of honor to which you have been elected or appointed. Learn well the responsibilities entrusted to you so that you may intelligently discharge the duties you are to undertake. The Constitution, By-Laws and Ritual of our organization prescribe in detail the duties of your office.

By virtue of the confidence placed in you, through your election or appointment, we assume you will thoroughly acquaint yourself with your duties.

Council members, you may be seated. The National Sergeant-at-Arms has now escorted the Commander-in-Chief-Elect to his station.

I would like to take just a moment and recognize, because we failed to do it, our Chief of Staff, Richard Branson from Georgia, and our Inspector General, Precilla Wilkewitz from Louisiana, who is our Inspector General. They did take their Obligation, Commander-in-Chief.

Commander-in-Chief-Elect John F. Gwizdak, before administering your Obligation, it is proper to remind you of certain duties. You will be held responsible for the Charter of this organization. At the end of your term of office, you will surrender it to the officer to install your successor.

It will be your duty to see that all the National Officers perform their duties to the best of their ability. You will keep yourself informed of all proposed legislation which may affect the welfare of our members, of our organization, and strive for adoption of only those measures which will be beneficial.

You will be required to devote all your time to the many duties of your office. You are expected to make a special study of the By-Laws and Ritual of this organization so that you may render firm and impartial decisions on important matters referred to you.

As Commander-in-Chief, you will be regarded by your comrades and the general public as typifying wise and vigorous leadership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. May all of your efforts and accomplishments bring credit to your administration and to our organization.

Comrade John F. Gwizdak, are you willing to assume and ready to assume your solemn Obligation?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT GWIZDAK: I am.

INSTALLING OFFICER CARNEY: Will the audience please stand. Comrade Commander-in-Chief-Elect John F. Gwizdak, you will raise your right hand and touch the flag of our country with your left, give your name as I touch your head, and repeat after me.

(Whereupon, Commander-in-Chief-Elect Gwizdak received the following Obligation: "In the presence of Almighty God and the Officers and

Delegates of this Order here assembled, I, John F. Gwizdak, do hereby solemnly promise that I will faithfully discharge, to the best of my ability, the duties of the office of Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, to which I have been elected in accordance with the Constitution, By-Laws and Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. I solemnly promise that at the close of the term to which I have been elected, or sooner if so ordered by proper authority, I will surrender immediately to only the duly authorized person or persons, the National Charter, all records, money and other properties of the organization in my possession or under my control.

"I do further solemnly promise that I will be fair and impartial in all my actions toward all comrades, and I will always strive to promote the best interests of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. So help me God.")

INSTALLING OFFICER CARNEY: As you were. I would now at this time ask the Council members and all Past Commanders-in-Chief and all the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars to place your hand forward and repeat after me: "To you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief John F. Gwizdak, I pledge my sincere allegiance."

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I now place in your possession the Charter. I also present this gavel, the emblem of authority. Use it firmly but with discretion.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, National Officers, Delegates of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, at this 101st Convention, I now proclaim the National Officers duly installed and this organization in good working order for the ensuing year.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you so much for this honor. I am not going to go into my official speech yet because I have some things I need to do first of all. That is, I need to thank some folks that is not on the original script, because, as you know, things change very quickly.

It is just like in combat. All the great plans in the world are made and as soon as the first bullet is fired, things change. I would like to thank the Commissioner of Safety from Georgia for again providing us the great company of the Georgia State Patrol.

For 24 years, Ken Birdsong has represented gray Georgia and that area around there, around Macon, and has served as Chairman of the Defense and Veterans Affairs. Representative Birdsong is very close and he kind of surprised me by being here a couple of days ago, because he said he wanted to be here to take part in this. Let me introduce Ken Birdsong from Georgia, a Representative.

Also Ray Brooks, Joe Wood, Bill Jessup, will you please stand. All of these people have contributed one way or another to making my election possible. Congratulations to each and every one of the officers that sits here today and out in that audience.

You have made such a tremendous difference in our organization, and

I thank you and I make my commitment to each of you that I am never going to try to embarrass you. I did not say I would be tactful, but I will try not to embarrass you. I will try to do that.

To John Smart, "A New Century of Service" has begun because of your leadership. "A New Century of Service" has begun because you had the intestinal fortitude, and down South we call it guts, because you have done things different and you made things happen, and you are one of the one percent of the people that do that type of thing. I thank you for that leadership. You will always be my friend, and I love you. I will try to arrange the pages to keep the tears out of my eyes.

At this time I would like to call to the podium someone that has some words she would like to relate to you. With your permission, I would ask that Betty be permitted to speak to the audience. (Applause)

MS. BETTY GWIZDAK: This is new for me. I am like John, I have to wait a few minutes to get the tears away, and I think I will really need to go to the bathroom. But anyway from me I thank you for this moment of privilege of your time. First, I want to thank the 2000-2001 Commanders and wives for the gifts that they gave me and for thinking of me along with John's 18-wheeler.

I love and appreciate each and every one of you as well as for all of the others for their calls, their cards, their flowers, and just for being who you are. My purpose this morning, and you will have to forgive me if I get a little bit shook up. I do not speak as well as John. I just teach him how. (Laughter)

I had heard yesterday when I was unable to attend an event that there were a lot of rumors going around, plus calls to the room to see what hospital I had been taken to, and what type of cancer and all it was. For all of the rumors that were heard, it is all untrue. As you can see, I am alive even though John may not wish it sometimes. (Laughter)

If you will just permit me for just one more minute and let me explain the problem, then those rumors, when you do hear them, you can say, "Oh, no, this is from the horse's mouth" being from the South, born and raised there. This disease of the artery is called Takayasu arthritis.

It took me a long time to learn that, but I have been doing it since last August and I have kept all the physicians and groups around Atlanta busy because they had not enough information on this virus, either because the Japanese doctor that had found it and discovered it, or whatever.

It is most prevalent in the Oriental people, women, not males but women. So I proceeded to tell the doctor I felt it was because I had a Korean daughter-in-law, and that explained the problem. This little gentleman, Takayasu arthritis, shuts off the blood supply to the arm. The arm cannot do anything and no feeling and blue.

The guys and the ladies that have seen me the last few years, and since then know how it has been a goat rope, but I do it, especially I want to thank Jan and Mary. I told them this morning I felt lonesome sitting by myself, without sitting with them holding my hand.

Anyway, with the virus, the doctor corrected the problem. They are hoping Mr. Takayasu's arthritis is not active at the time because it could cause a loss of limb. He said the surgery was successful and he has blocked off that little gentleman, and now the biggest problem is the surgical site, and no one told me that it could hurt like heck where they got the artery from.

The doctor said, "Oh, you will not have to worry about that. We will use a synthetic." But that is okay. Well, I am from the South and we are just a little bit deeper, but not that much, just because some of you guys talk funny. My veins and arteries would not match this synthetic.

So it is one of these whirl around and do another deal. He explained to me that when he fixes the left arm, that he will have more knowledge of the artery and the vein, and he will make a straighter incision to retrieve the vein that he will need for the left arm to correct it.

So, no, I do not have cancer, I didn't go to the hospital. And I apologize to the officers and also to all the delegation for them having to pull John off the stage yesterday morning because someone had told him there was an emergency with me at the hotel.

The emergency was it just takes me a long time to get my clothes on. So again, I thank each of you for your concerns, and at any time your calls, your contacts, whatever, because I will be at home and doing what we wives have found out over the years.

We wait for the husband's travels and they are gone, and not one of the greatest lives in the world, but trust me they are gone a lot. So, again, thanks to each of you and by Jeckell or at least by the time he gets the left arm fixed of Mr. Takayasu, I will be in A-number one shape, but just a little bit older.

Of course, I started when I was ten years old in the Auxiliary. Never hesitate to call home. John may not be there, but I will certainly appreciate talking with you. Again, thank you and I hope this will stop the rumors that I am dying, even though some would wish it so. Thank you each and every one of you. I love you all as always. Thank you. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAPEL PIN AND GOLD LIFE MEMBERSHIP CARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: My first official act I would like to do at this time. Comrade Past Commander-in-Chief John Smart, I would like to present you with the Past Commander-in-Chief's pin. It is with distinct pleasure that I present you with your Gold Life Membership Card. Do you have any words to say? I am not limiting you in any way.

REMARKS BY PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief John Gwizdak. To Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Jim Goldsmith and to Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Ray Sisk, I thank you

all for caring enough for this country and for our fellow veterans to accept the responsibilities that have been bestowed upon you today. I know you will be an outstanding team of leaders as we continue the cause of caring for this country's veterans.

To you, John and Jim, and to Betty and to Jan, we thank you for being a part of our family. Now, this is a tough act to follow, because we have been family. We have spent some good times together, some tough times, and I know Betty was always in our prayers when she could not be with us, and she was going through her difficult problems of surgeries.

I want you to know, Betty, you are always in our prayers. We were a family. When you travel some three hundred days a year, and we have been locked up sometimes in hotel rooms, we get the chance to get together for a few moments, it is always nice to see those smiling faces, because I tell you they are truly outstanding leaders. I promise you we will all remain friends. I know Ray will be accepted into your family.

To my wife, Mary, and to my family, I probably could never thank them enough for allowing me the opportunity to serve each and every one of you in this room today. I just want to end my remarks because, like you, I am ready to hear from our Commander-in-Chief and listen to his marching orders.

I just want to say you made a difference. You made it possible last year to get \$1.7 billion put back into the VA budget, because you were actively involved in your congressional districts in notifying those that represent you in the halls of Congress.

You made life better for veterans today than what they were a year ago today. Thanks to you we were able to make sure that we brought back the fifty percent retirement back to the men and women in the military and making sure they got the things they need in helping correct that soldiers, airmen, Marine and sailors are not on food stamps. We still have more work to do.

I think that if there is anything we have accomplished this year, it was our political activism in making sure those that want to represent us in the halls of Congress and those that want to seek to be the next President of the United States will make veterans a top priority.

They were here this weekend because of their concern how veterans are going to vote in the next election. So I say thank you, thank you, from the bottom of my heart for making sure that veterans are cared for in our VA facilities. Thank you for caring for those young men and women who we are so proud of each and every day who put themselves in harm's way because you made a difference.

You made a difference to them and their families, and you made their job a little easier. I say continue to do the things that you are going to do, because I know under the Gwizdak, Goldsmith, Sisk team will be one of the most outstanding teams of leadership that this organization has ever had, and to all of them I wish you safe travel as you travel representing the greatest veterans organization on the face of the earth, your Veterans of

Foreign Wars of the United States.

God bless you, God bless America, and continue to do the things you do so well. I am so proud of each and every one of you. Have a good day.
(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

ACCEPTANCE ADDRESS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: I stand before you with a sense of history, a sense of honor, and proudly accept command of this, the greatest veteran's organization in the world. I am profoundly grateful to you, the delegates to the 101st National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the distinction you have bestowed upon me.

I particularly want to thank the entire membership of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and especially the Southern Conference, the great Department of Georgia, District 16 and their Ladies Auxiliaries. As I travel in the coming year, I will always remember the commitment you had to my success.

There are so many individuals to thank that it would take more time than I can ask you to give up. With that in mind, I will limit these thanks to the following:

Bob Lancaster, original secretary-treasurer of my campaign, deceased; Betty Lancaster, campaign fund-raiser, also deceased. I have asked their son, Richard Lancaster, to accept my thanks on their behalf. Also Richard and Mary Branson, Ray Christy, Becky Riggins, Bob Bates, William Wilson and Blanche; Anne Brindle. To the entire Campaign Committee and a host of others, I thank you.

Commander John Bogardes, Post 5080, please relay my thanks to the members and Auxiliary who started me on this amazing journey. Who would have thought it would culminate here?

To Madam President, Patricia Jankowski, and all the members of the VFW Ladies Auxiliary, I thank you for all you have done and will continue to go for the good of this organization. I look forward to sharing every future success that I know our partnership will produce.

I also want to thank my family. Please stand as I introduce you. Connie Mayhugh, my sister, and husband Shirley; Sherry Jessup, my daughter; and Robert Charles Ray Barnes, son, and Chaeo; Louise Smith, sister-in-law. Also all my thanks for all of J. B.'s commitment. I miss him.

Some family had to leave early and others were not able to attend. But most importantly, I would like to recognize my wife, Betty. Without her understanding, her sacrifice and her support, I would not be with you today. I love you, Betty. Thank you.

Certainly, I am filled with humility because I believe in the role of the Commander-in-Chief, as did then General Eisenhower. He said that the Commander-in-Chief is "a distinction I shall treasure the more because I know it is not intended as an individual reward for personal accomplishment, but rather as a tribute from you to the unity achieved among the fight-

ing men and women of democracy with whom I had the privilege to be joined in the days of war.”

The unity that General Eisenhower spoke of is a unity that the average citizen will never comprehend. It is an unyielding bond forged during the battle campaigns of war and it is unique in that it can never be broken. It is understood by a chosen few, for we are members of a select, very special fraternity.

It is solemn silence during the playing of Taps. It is a swelled chest during the playing of the National Anthem and it is the foundation on which this great organization exists. It is a unity that is continually displayed at every level of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

I wish to acknowledge and thank all the Post, District and Department Commanders and Auxiliary Presidents for your loyalty and your ability to unite our fellow comrades and sisters in friendship and in the great service of this country.

Service to others is a natural extension of that bond. It is not an option, it is our responsibility. It has been and always will be an important part of what we do and who we are based on where we have been. Our service programs are designed for maximum benefits to all veterans and their dependents.

The youth and community service forge unbreakable ties with towns big and small across the country. From Buddy Poppy to Operation Uplink to the National Home, our service enhances the daily lives of millions. I am extremely committed to the continual improvement in how these services are delivered to you, the membership, and to all veterans.

I am specifically interested in the National Veterans Service Program. From the Post and Department Service Officer to the National staff, the National Veterans Service Program is dedicated to providing you with a nationwide network of highly-skilled professional representatives. These men and women are committed to providing you and all veterans and their dependents with the highest level of representation, to ensure that you will receive all due entitlements from a grateful nation.

To support them in their efforts to help eliminate the VA's 33 percent error rate on benefit claims, I am committed to providing them and all our leaders with the best training and state of the art technology.

Professionalism breeds credibility and I want the Veterans of Foreign Wars to be the representative of choice for America's veterans and their dependents. I also want to take the politics out of veterans' service work. That is why I have asked for the development of a National Veterans Service Strategic Plan. This plan, once approved by the National Council of Administration, will be our road map for the future of National Veterans Service.

It is imperative that veterans who use the VA system have timely access to quality health care and services. The VA must update facilities and services for women veterans. They have served with distinction and do not

need to endure any more bureaucratic red tape to address their specific issues. As our World War II and Korean War era veterans increase in age, long-term health care is a priority that cannot be ignored.

I am outraged that a veteran may have to wait months for an appointment to see a health-care professional. We will not allow this to continue. In this regard, you have the opportunity to play a vital role. You can alert our national staff by calling 1-800-VFW-1899 with problems that are occurring in your local regional offices and VA medical centers. Our national staff is on hand to monitor the delivery of these services in VA health-care facilities and regional offices and ensure timely solutions.

During our proud 101-year history, the Veterans of Foreign Wars has made a commitment to tackle the tough issues that veterans face. From Agent Orange to Persian Gulf illness, every generation of veterans has paved the way for the next. Toward this end, we are now aggressively establishing VFW representation at pre-discharge sites across the country. These sites will allow active duty personnel in the discharge process the opportunity to have access to a trained service officer who will then advocate their claim to the VA.

This new approach will ensure that veterans enter the VA system immediately and will allow us to avoid the same old story of lost records, faded memories and the endless delays created by bureaucratic red tape.

This new approach will give us the opportunity to introduce the VFW to our military personnel while they are processing out of the service.

This new approach will give us a golden opportunity to recruit an entirely new cadre of veterans into our ranks because they will see firsthand the advocacy role the VFW plays on behalf of America's veterans.

As long as there are soldiers, Marines, sailors, airmen and Coast Guardsmen there will be veterans, and I can assure you that the Veterans of Foreign Wars will be there as we have been for the past 101 years to provide the service they deserve and have earned.

Fellow comrades, it saddens and upsets me to think that there are those who believe we do nothing more than socialize. In truth, we are to blame. We are the spokesmen and women of our day, and we must aggressively tell the story of the Veterans of Foreign Wars to a new generation. As leaders in this organization, you can play as large or as small of a role as you want. I challenge each and every one of you to accept the great role, and I know you will excel.

History shows that we were once a key part of the social fabric of communities across America. The Local VFW Post was the place to be for a Friday night fish fry and a Saturday night dance. If you ask me, it still is. It is a community center for the young and the old.

While certain aspects and activities may have faded with the changing times, we will continue to volunteer, we will continue to help foster patriotism among the young, and we will always place America first. We are not so anchored to the past that we cannot be geared to the times. We have prospered for over 100 years because we have a proven product.

Remember the bond that I spoke of earlier, that bond that was torn in combat? This is the image that is sometimes unclear to those who are not members and this is the image we must convey to the men and women who should be members of this great organization. We must tell our special and unique story to more veterans. We have only been successful in telling our story to a fraction of those who are eligible to join our unique organization. We can do more. You, me, yes, all of us. We must do more to get the message out.

You do not have to be installed to be a leader within our great organization. For the good of all who wear the Cross of Malta emblem, we must never forget that we were organized to aid veterans, to protect veterans' rights and to defend our way of life against all enemies. We must educate those who should be members of this organization of the impact that they have in their community and country simply by joining the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

My slogan "Follow Me" is the cry of the infantry squad leader. Like the infantry squad leader, I, as your Commander-in-Chief, will always be out front leading the way. With your commitment and leadership acting as direct fire support, the team of Gwizdak, Goldsmith and Sisk will act honestly, answer boldly, and assault courageously any threat to America's veterans and her Armed Forces.

As you are well aware, this current administration and Congress has forced our active duty armed forces to continually do more with less. Too many missions with outdated equipment and not enough dollars have created an exodus of skilled active duty military personnel and a stumbling block to recruiting. As a result, more emphasis has been placed on our National Guard and Reserve components to bridge the gap and to fill the ranks.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars recognizes today's Guard and Reserve number, 1.4 million men and women. They are half the total force, critical contributors to every mission, and essential to our national security. This new force structure asks Guard and Reservists to perform to the standards of full-time active duty. Longer and frequent deployments, some up to six months, place extreme pressure on employers and families. Guard and Reservists fear losing their primary job because of their patriotism and voice concerns about supporting their families on what is considered to be supplemental income.

What was once considered an asset is now perceived as a liability. Once again, unit retention is placed in jeopardy at the cost of national security.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars will never tire in its efforts to ensure that our nation's military is properly funded, staffed and combat ready. Only with total commitment and total force will we ensure total victory.

As a military retiree, I am especially concerned for the well-being of our military personnel and my fellow retirees. It is unacceptable that any warrior of our Armed Forces is forced to be on food stamps. It is also unac-

ceptable for creditors to hound any warrior or their family because of an inadequate military health-care system. The issue of pay, health care and housing for our military personnel and their families must be improved, and it must be improved now.

As an organization we have fought long and hard for a new G.I. Bill for the 21st Century. Our men and women need the opportunity to receive an education at an institution of higher learning of their choice free of cost in recognition of their honorable service to our nation.

While some great improvements have been made, I am committed to enhancing this quality of life issue for our troops. I am hopeful that the next administration and Congress will address all of these quality of life issues for our military personnel and their families immediately upon assuming office in January, 2001.

Washington politics needs to be put aside and the welfare of our nation's finest must be addressed. I can assure you the Veterans of Foreign Wars will not relent in our efforts to correct these injustices.

In the past, many of you have heard me say that America needs to love you. Well, this past April, she took a step finally in that direction. The Congress declared the American G.I. the person of the century.

Everyone in this room is an American G.I., and I am truly honored to be in the presence of the men and women whose contributions were recognized as the single most significant force affecting the course of the 20th Century. There are those who cannot be here with us today to share in this great honor. Those who lie under white crosses, Stars of David, or those who have been committed to the deep.

I would also be remiss if I did not recognize and reaffirm our unwavering commitment to full accountability of our POW/MIA brethren. Just as they are not forgotten, neither are our comrades who carried the torch for democracy 50 years ago this year in a faraway country fighting for a people they did not even know.

At our 51st National Encampment in Chicago, we hosted over 100 disabled Korean War veterans who became our comrades that week. Many more of you would follow and fill our ranks and as our country honors veterans of the Korean War, so do we all.

You proved that freedom is not free, and I want you to know that you are our heroes, and you will never be forgotten by those of us who understand.

We, however, cannot rest on our laurels because we now possess an opportunity to affect the course of the first presidential election in the 21st Century. Many of you were extremely active and instrumental in the primary campaigns this past spring. News coverage of the campaign trail often featured footage of town hall meetings hosted in local VFW Posts, and nobody could mistake the VFW cap present in every crowd.

Because of your efforts, we have witnessed an historic increase in the VA budget and the possible elimination of the military retiree offset. Most importantly, we had an opportunity to bring our concerns to both the

Republican and Democratic National Convention Platform Committees and attend both parties' National Conventions where we made our positions extremely clear.

Veterans and military issues must be on the agenda of both parties and their candidates for the Congress and especially the office of the presidency. Veterans and our military personnel must be a priority.

As a result of all of this, we now find positive statements in each party's platforms. But they must be acted upon and made public policy. When our leaders tell us that we are enjoying the greatest prosperity our nation has ever witnessed, I want you to ask them how can we have a surplus when we have not paid our debts?

My comrades, as long as one warrior needs a pill, a leg, a bed, or a home, America has not paid its debt to those that have made freedom a household word. This is why Election 2000 will continue to be a top priority for the VFW.

In an effort to ensure that our views are taken seriously, we must continue the momentum of our widespread grassroots campaign. We must continue to educate ourselves, our families and our neighbors on veterans' and military issues such as the VA budget and defense readiness. We must effectively communicate our legislative views to our respective state's congressional delegation and those who want to be President. We must make our goals, their goals. And most importantly, we must vote.

As Post 1607 in Laconia, New Hampshire proclaimed, "We fought for the right to vote, now vote."

Make no mistake, we will be measured by the polls. If the exit polls show that a significant number of veterans turned out to vote, then the new and returning members of Congress and the new Administration will know that the VFW contributed to their victory. They supported our legislative goals to garner our vote and they know that we will hold them accountable when it comes time to enact those goals.

I can assure you that the Gwizdak-Goldsmith-Sisk team will not accept any middle-of-the-road politics or any middle-of-the-road politicians.

Failing to turn out the vote or voting unwisely will be costly. The ever-cynical, Ambrose Bierce defined the vote as the instrument and symbol of a free man's power to make a fool of himself and a wreck of his country. I trust that you will not let our country down, for you never have.

I pledge to you the resources necessary to ensure visibility, commitment and involvement in Election 2000. Follow me to the polls and cast a vote for an America we can be proud of. This year will be an exciting and challenging year. It will be the most successful year because of your commitment and involvement.

By working together on the Post, District, Department and National level as one unit, we, of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, will ensure that our veterans receive quality and timely health care and benefits, and that the quality of life issues for our military personnel are addressed.

My comrades, there are no stumbling blocks, just stepping-stones to a

successful year. God loves you, America needs to love you, and I love you. Thank you for the honor and trust that you have bestowed upon me this wonderful day. (Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

CLOSING CEREMONIES

COMRADE LARRY LeFEBVRE (Post 552 - Michigan): Comrade Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE LARRY LeFEBVRE (Post 552 - Michigan): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, there being no further business to come before this convention, and the officers having been duly elected and installed for the ensuing year, I move that the 101st National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States be closed sine die.

COMRADE WILLIAM DOBIE (Post 4659 - Michigan): I proudly stand to second the motion to adjourn this convention.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: My comrades and delegates to the 101st National Convention, we have a motion on the floor, properly seconded, to close the Business Session of the 101st Convention. All in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed. The chair is not in doubt. We will close the convention at this time. Comrade Sergeant-at-Arms, will you prepare the room for the removal of the Colors.

(Whereupon, the Honor Guard retired the Colors at this time.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: I will call on Father Leonard, our National Chaplain, for the Closing Prayer.

(Whereupon, National Chaplain Leonard gave the Closing Prayer from the Ritual.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Closing Ceremonies for the 101st National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States have been performed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you, Comrade Sergeant-at-Arms. Again, thanks to each and every one of you. I now declare the 101st Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars closed sine die.

(Whereupon, the convention was duly adjourned at 11:00 o'clock a.m., sine die.)

**AMENDMENTS TO NATIONAL BY-LAWS AND MANUAL OF
PROCEDURE AND RITUAL CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON
NATIONAL BY-LAWS, MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL**

B-1 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 102 — APPLICATIONS-AFFILIATION OF NEW MEMBERS.

Amend Section 102, National By-Laws, by deleting the last three sentences in the second paragraph in their entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“Membership in more than one post in the same Department is prohibited. Any person who is or becomes a member of more than one Post in the same Department shall elect to remain in the Post of his choice and surrender membership in any other Post. In the event no election is made, the Commander-in-Chief or his designee shall assign the member to a Post in the same Department.” (Disapproved)

B-2 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 704 — RELIEF FUND.

Amend Section 704, National By-Laws, by deleting the words “all sales” in the second sentence and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“the distribution” (Approved)

B-3 (Recommended by Chairman, National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief, Sr. Vice Commander-in-Chief and Jr. Vice Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE XIII—AMENDMENTS.

Amend Article XIII, National By-Laws, by redesignating it as Article XIV and renumbering sections accordingly.

Amend the National By-Laws further by inserting the following:

“ARTICLE XIII—MENS AUXILIARY

Sec. 1301 – Organization and disbandment of Mens Auxiliaries.

A Post, if the By-Laws of the Department having jurisdiction so provide may form an association separately constituted as a subordinate unit. The Department in which the Post is located shall charter such unit. Within two (2) months of receiving their charter such unit must complete and file an application for exemption under 501 C (19) of the Internal Revenue

Code. Should said unit not obtain such exemption within one year of their charter date the unit would automatically and without formality surrender their charter. Such auxiliary shall be governed by and subject to the jurisdiction of the National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the Commander-in-Chief, the National Council of Administration, Department Convention, Department Commander and Post.

Departments are not authorized to issue charters to units other than those sponsored by a Post and the Mens Auxiliary authorized in these By-Laws may not establish superior units to those at the Post level. Formation, control and disbandment of these auxiliaries as well as suspension or cancellation of charters shall be in the manner prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 1302 – Eligibility.

Membership in the Mens Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars shall be limited to husbands, widowers, fathers, grandfathers, sons, grandsons, brothers and half brothers of persons who were or are eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Members must be not less than sixteen (16) years old and must be citizens of the United States.

Men eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall not be eligible for membership in the Mens Auxiliary.

Sec. 1303 – By-Laws, Rules of Order and Order of Business.

The Mens Auxiliary may, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting at a regular meeting adopt By-Laws governing the auxiliary as are deemed necessary, provided that each member has been notified and provided a copy of the proposed By-Laws at least seven (7) days in advance by first class mail and such By-Laws do not conflict with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual, or laws and usages of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or the By-Laws of the Post or Department having jurisdiction. Unless otherwise provided for in the auxiliary By-Laws, auxiliary By-Laws may be amended by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present at a stated meeting thereof provided, however, such amendments have been read at the preceding stated meeting and each member notified at least seven (7) days in advance by first class mail of the contents of the amendments and date on which proposed amendments are to be presented for adoption.

Such proposed By-Laws or amendments shall be submitted to the Department Commander, who shall review them for compliance with the Department By-Laws and shall forward them, with a recommendation, to the Commander-in-Chief within thirty (30) days, certifying there is no conflict in the proposed By-Laws with the Department By-Laws. No By-Laws or amendments adopted by the auxiliary shall become effective until

reviewed by the Commander-in-Chief or his designee.

The Mens Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars shall use the Rules of Order provided for in Section 1001 of the Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Order of Business shall be as follows:

Opening in due form (prayer and pledge of allegiance to the flag)
Roll call of Officers (President, Sr. Vice President, Jr. Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Chaplain, Trustees)
Read, refer membership applications
Report of investigating committee
Ballot on candidates
Read minutes
Treasurer's report (receipts and disbursements)
Read bills
Report of Chaplain
Report of all committees
Unfinished business (read communications associated with unfinished business and vote)
New business (read communications associated with new business and vote)
Closing in due form (closing prayer)" (Disapproved)

B-4 (Proposed by Department of Europe)

SECTION 101 — ELIGIBILITY.

Amend Section 101, National By-Laws, by deleting "(1)" and placing a period after the word "Charter" and deleting all words thereafter in the first paragraph.
(Disapproved)

B-5 (Proposed by Department of Texas)

SECTION 102 — APPLICATIONS-AFFILIATION OF NEW MEMBERS.

Amend Section 102, National By-Laws, by deleting the second sentence in paragraph two and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"Membership in more than one Post at one time in the same Department is prohibited." (Disapproved)

B-6 (Proposed by Department of Connecticut)

SECTION 108 — REMOVING INELIGIBLES.

Amend Section 108, National By-Laws, by deleting the word "conclusive" in the second sentence of paragraph one. (Approved)

B-7 (Proposed by Department of Texas)

SECTION 210 — SURRENDER OR FORFEITURE OF CHARTER.

Amend Section 210, National By-Laws, paragraph one "Voluntary Surrender." by deleting the following in the sixth sentence:

"unless during such thirty (30) day period, the Department Commander receives a demand in writing from at least ten (10) members in good standing in said Post to continue it." (Approved)

B-8 (Proposed by Department of Ohio)

SECTION 610 — OFFICERS, POWERS AND DUTIES.

Amend Section 610 (d) (14), National By-Laws, by deleting all therein and substituting in lieu thereof the following:

"Prepare a tentative budget for the financial operations of the ensuing year. Said budget shall set forth all anticipated income and estimated expenses. It shall set forth the amount of all compensation to be received by each of the following officers for the ensuing year: (1) Commander-in-Chief; (2) Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief; (3) Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief; (4) Quartermaster General; (5) Judge Advocate General; (6) Surgeon General; (7) Chaplain; and, (8) Adjutant General. Restricted funds shall be budgeted separately in every instance, and the budget shall be in balance. The tentative budget shall be submitted to the Commander-in-Chief for consideration within ten (10) days following adjournment of the National Convention and final action must be taken on the adoption of the budget at the first stated meeting of the National Council of Administration, and when adopted the budget shall be the expenditure guide for the ensuing year. Not later than thirty (30) days after the first meeting of the National Council of Administration, he shall forward to all Department Commanders and all Post Commanders a detailed copy of the national budget adopted by the National Council of Administration for their information." (Disapproved)

B-9 (Proposed by Department of Texas)

SECTION 610 — OFFICERS, POWERS AND DUTIES.

Amend Section 610, National By-Laws, by adding to the last sentence of (d) (16) the following:

", providing that none of these Directors/Employees shall have served as Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars during the previous five (5) years."

Amend further, Section 610, by adding to the end of paragraph (f) (12) the following:

“, providing that none of these Assistant Adjutants General shall have served as Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars during the previous five (5) years.”

Amend further, Section 610, by adding to the last sentence of paragraph (f) (13) the following:

“, providing that none of these Directors/Employees shall have served as Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars during the previous five (5) years.” (Disapproved)

B-10 (Proposed by Department of Utah)

SECTION 617 — REGIONAL NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS – HOW ELECTED.

Amend Section 617, National By-Laws, by deleting all therein and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“Each Department shall constitute a Regional District as enumerated below and shall be represented by a Regional National Council of Administration Member who is in good standing of a Post in the Department. The Department Convention preceding the National Convention at which the term is to commence shall, in the same manner and at the same time as Department Officers are elected, elect a Regional National Council of Administration Member who shall be installed into office at the National Convention.

Regional Districts shall bear numerical designations as enumerated below. Regional Districts designated by an even number shall elect a Regional National Council of Administration Member in even numbered years for a two year term and Regional Districts designated by an odd number shall elect a Regional National Council of Administration Member in odd numbered years for a two year term.

Each Department and the numerical designation of its Regional District is enumerated below:

1 Maine	2 Vermont	3 New Hampshire	4 Massachusetts
5 New Jersey	6 Connecticut	7 New York	8 Rhode Island
9 Pennsylvania	10 Delaware	11 Maryland	12 Washington, DC
13 Europe	14 Indiana	15 Illinois	16 Ohio
17 Michigan	18 Minnesota	19 Missouri	20 South Dakota
21 Iowa	22 Nebraska	23 Wisconsin	24 West Virginia
25 Mississippi	26 Virginia	27 Kentucky	28 Alabama
29 Tennessee	30 Oklahoma	31 North Carolina	32 Arkansas
33 South Carolina	34 Georgia	35 Florida	36 Texas
37 Louisiana	38 Washington	39 California	40 North Dakota
41 Kansas	42 Montana	43 Colorado	44 Idaho
45 Arizona	46 Pacific Areas	47 Oregon	48 Wyoming

49 New Mexico 50 Alaska 51 Nevada 52 Hawaii
53 Utah 54 Latin America/Caribbean

Each Regional National Council of Administration Member present at a meeting shall be entitled to one vote for each 5,000 members or a portion thereof in accordance with the prior year membership of the Department constituting the Regional District as recorded by National Headquarters on June 30th.

In the event of an illness, or emergency of a personal nature, which prevents the Regional National Council of Administration Member from attending a National Council of Administration meeting, the National Commander-in-Chief may authorize that Department Commander to cast the Departments full vote on the Council of Administration floor.” (Disapproved)

B-11 (Proposed by Department of South Dakota)

SECTION 709 — CONTROL OF UNITS.

Amend Section 709, National By-Laws, by deleting the word “including” in paragraph three lines five and twelve, and substituting in lieu thereof the word “except”.
(Disapproved)

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MANUAL OF PROCEDURE

M-1 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 103—ELECTION, NOTIFICATION, OBLIGATION.

Amend Section 103, Manual of Procedure, by deleting paragraphs two and three in their entirety and substituting in lieu thereof the following:

“The application will be referred to a Post Reviewing Committee of three members. The committee shall make a careful review of the facts set forth on the application card and other bona fide evidence of eligibility. With respect to applications of National Members-at-Large, or Department Members-at-Large, the Adjutant General or the Department Adjutant shall make a careful review of the facts set forth on the application card or other evidence of eligibility. After such review, the reviewing authority shall recommend the applicant's election or rejection.

The Post Reviewing Committee shall not recommend acceptance of an application unless eligibility has been fully determined. The Post is accountable for the eligibility of every member accepted into membership. With respect to National Members-at-Large, the National Headquarters is accountable for the eligibility of every member accepted into membership.

With respect to Department Members-at-Large, the Department Headquarters is accountable for the eligibility of every member accepted into membership. Pride of membership and pride in our eligibility requirements should impress on every member and every reviewing committee the importance of these provisions.

The original application of every member shall remain permanently on file in the records of the Post. The original application of every Department Member-at-Large shall remain permanently on file in the records of the Department. The original application of every National Member-at-Large shall remain permanently on file in the records of the National Headquarters."

Amend further Section 103 by deleting the third sentence of paragraph four entitled "Balloting on Applications". (Approved)

M-2 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 104—ADMISSION FEE AND DUES.

Amend Section 104, Manual of Procedure, by adding at the end of the section the following paragraph:

"One-Year Rule. The annual dues for every member must be accepted if tendered by such member, or a member in his behalf, within one year of the date on which he became delinquent." (Approved)

M-3 (Recommended by the National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 106—FORMER MEMBERS-REINSTATEMENT.

Amend Section 106, Manual of Procedure, by deleting the last paragraph "one year rule" in its entirety. (Approved)

M-4 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 415—NOMINATION, ELECTION, INSTALLATION AND TERM OF OFFICE.

Amend Section 415, Manual of Procedure by deleting the fifth paragraph in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"District officers shall take the officers obligation before the adjournment of the meeting at which elected. The installation shall be conducted by a member in good standing who holds or has held an office equal to or higher than District Commander. The District Commander-elect shall select the installing officer.

District officers shall take office upon the confirmation of election and installation of the Department Commander by the Department Convention." (Approved)

M-5 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 711—BUDDY POPPY.

Amend Section 711, Manual of Procedure, by deleting the word "sale" in the last paragraph and substituting in lieu thereof the following:
"distribution" (Approved)

M-6 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 1101—ORGANIZATION AND DISBANDMENT OF AUXILIARIES.

Amend Section 1101, Manual of Procedure, by inserting the words, "Upon a review of the matter," at the beginning of the last sentence in (d) (3). (Approved)

M-7 (Recommended by Chairman, National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief, Sr. Vice Commander-in-Chief and Jr. Vice Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE XIII—AMENDMENTS.

Amend Article XIII, Manual of Procedure, by redesignating it as Article XIV and numbering sections accordingly.

Amend further the Manual of Procedure, by inserting the following:

"Article XIII—Mens Auxiliary

Sec. 1301—Organization and Disbandment of Mens Auxiliaries

(a) Formation. Mens Auxiliaries shall be hereafter formed and approved in accordance with the following provisions: No Mens Auxiliary of a Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be formed, unless approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Post membership present at a regular or special meeting, due notice of the proposed formation of an auxiliary having been given the entire membership in writing at least one week prior to a regular meeting, or special meeting called for the aforementioned purpose. A Mens Auxiliary may

be formed by not less than twenty-five (25) persons eligible for membership. Each Mens Auxiliary shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the Post under which it is affiliated. It shall also be subject to the jurisdiction of the Department Convention, Council of Administration and Commander of its respective Department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States with respect to matters of authority.

(b) **Governance.** Each Mens Auxiliary shall function in accordance with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the By-Laws of the Department issuing the charter and the Post with which it is affiliated or lawful orders issued by the Commander-in-Chief, the National or Department Council of Administration or Department Commander.

(c) **Suspension and Discontinuance.** The Commander-in-Chief or the Department Commander may direct the suspension, for a period not to exceed sixty (60) days, or the cancellation of the charter of any Mens Auxiliary, upon the recommendation of the Post Commander under which such unit is affiliated, when it is shown the conduct of officers or members thereof may be detrimental to the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

A Post may, by vote of eighty (80) percent of its members present at a meeting following a written notice mailed or delivered to each member of the Post in good standing at least ten (10) days before said meeting, vote to request cancellation of the charter of its Mens Auxiliary. The notice must state the contemplated action and the reason therefor. If the Post votes to request cancellation of the charter of its Mens Auxiliary, it shall certify the action in writing and forward same to the Department Commander who shall forward it to the Commander-in-Chief with his recommendations. If, upon review of the matter, he believes that it is in the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to do so, the Commander-in-Chief shall direct the Department Commander of the Department having jurisdiction to cancel the charter of the Mens Auxiliary.

While the charter of a Mens Auxiliary is suspended, said unit shall not be permitted to function and officers thereof shall be without authority; provided, however, it or its officers shall have the right to appeal to the Commander-in-Chief to lift the suspension.

(d) **Disposition of Property.** In the event of surrender, cancellation or forfeiture of a charter of a Mens Auxiliary, all official records, money and other property shall immediately become

the property of the Post.

(e) Reports. The President of the Mens Auxiliary shall, within thirty (30) days after induction into office, submit to the Post Commander an itemized report of the financial and membership status of the auxiliary over which he is presiding officer. Such reports shall be acknowledged by the Post Commander during the next regular meeting and may be read to the members assembled." (Disapproved)

M-8 (Proposed by Department of Europe)

SECTION 101 — ELIGIBILITY.

Amend Section 101, Manual of Procedure, by deleting all after the first sentence of paragraph one and substituting in lieu thereof the following:

"There are two primary requisites for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States: (1) honorable service in the Armed Forces of the United States; (2) service entitling the applicant to the award of a recognized campaign medal or as set forth in the Congressional Charter and/or By-Laws." (Disapproved)

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE RITUAL

R-1 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

Amend the Ritual by substituting the words "Judge Advocate" wherever the words Post Advocate appear, in accordance with the By-Law amendment adopted at the 100th National Convention changing the title of Post Advocate to Judge Advocate.

(Approved)

RESOLUTIONS CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

No. 201 (Submitted by Department of Alabama)

PETITION CONGRESS TO AMEND THE VFW CONGRESSIONAL CHARTER TO INCLUDE FOR MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY, INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE RECEIVED EMINENT DANGER PAY (COMBAT PAY)

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to amend the charter of the Veterans of

Foreign Wars, to allow any individual who has received eminent danger pay (combat pay) to be eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars. (Approved)

No. 202 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

ELIMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS DISCRIMINATION

(Disapproved)

No. 203 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

ELIMINATE GENDER SPECIFIC LANGUAGE IN THE VFW CONGRESSIONAL CHARTER AND BY-LAWS AND MANUAL OF PROCEDURE

(Disapproved)

No. 204 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

EXTEND AGE CAP FOR THE SONS OF THE VFW

(Disapproved)

No. 205 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

(Disapproved)

No. 206 (Submitted by Department of Massachusetts)

VFW ESTABLISH A SPECIAL CEREMONY FOR THE HANDLING AND DISPOSITION OF THE AMERICAN FLAG

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we establish a formal course or action to be taken in reply to the handling of flags and their disposal; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we establish a special ceremony to properly dispose of flags in a revered and most solemn manner, whether public or private. (Approved)

No. 207 (Submitted by Department of Mississippi)

CONTINUE REFUNDING TO THE POSTS AND DEPARTMENTS THE INTEREST FROM LIFE MEMBERSHIP DUES

AFTER THE LIFE MEMBER IS DECEASED

(Disapproved)

No. 208 (Submitted by Department of Pennsylvania)

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

(Disapproved)

No. 209 (Submitted by Department of Pennsylvania)

FLAG EDUCATION

(Disapproved)

No. 210 (Submitted by Department of Washington)

A BY-LAWS ADDITION

(Disapproved)

No. 211 (Submitted by Department of Washington)

URGE CONGRESS TO AMEND OUR CHARTER TO EXTEND ELIGIBILITY TO "COLD WAR" GERMANY VETERANS WITH 30 DAYS CONSECUTIVE OR 60 DAYS BROKEN FROM 5 MAY 1955 THROUGH 2 OCTOBER 1990

(Disapproved)

**CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON
GENERAL RESOLUTIONS**

No. 301 (Submitted by Department of Utah)

ACTION TO PRESERVE VETERANS BACKCOUNTRY ACCESS
ON PUBLIC LANDS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we inform the President, the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture, and appropriate Congressional Committee Chairmen of our objection to the closure of long-established and used-by-the-public roads and tracks on federally managed public lands because of the adverse effect of such closures on the ability of older and disabled veterans and those veterans and current members of the armed forces with small children, grand-

children and great-grandchildren to enjoy the heretofore accessible scenic beauty and recreational opportunities of the backcountry in our national parks, national forests and other public lands owned by the federal government; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, we urge at the Department level to undertake similar action to assure that long-standing backcountry-access route on state owned public lands will not be denied to the aged, disabled and very young residents of those states; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, in concert with other veteran organizations, we act to assure appropriate representation on advisory bodies or in legislative and/or administrative hearings involving the issue of public access to public lands with the purpose of such representation being to assure that "America the Beautiful" will continue to be accessible to those who have endangered themselves to protect and defend her.

(Approved)

No. 302 (Submitted by Department of Delaware)

NATIONAL VETERANS AWARENESS WEEK

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Secretary of Education to work with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Veterans Day National Committee, and the veterans service organizations to encourage, prepare, and disseminate educational materials and activities for elementary and secondary school students aimed at increasing awareness of the contributions of veterans to the prosperity and freedoms enjoyed by United States citizens; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the week that includes Veterans Day be designated as "National Veterans Awareness Week" for the purpose of presenting such materials and activities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the President should issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to observe such week with appropriate education activities.

(Approved)

No. 303 (Submitted by Department of Louisiana)

TAXPAYER DOLLARS ABUSED

(Disapproved)

No. 304 (Submitted by Department of Minnesota)

VFW RECOMMENDS ALL POSTS FLY POW/MIA FLAG

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United

States, that we strongly urge/recommend that all VFW Posts fly the POW/MIA flag with our USA flag on their outside flag pole/flag poles.
(Approved)

No. 305 (Submitted by Department of Oregon)

REDUCE JUVENILE VIOLENCE

(Disapproved)

No. 306 (Submitted by Department of California)

PERMITTING COMMITMENT SERVICES FOR DECEASED
NON-CHRISTIAN MEMBERS OF VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

(Disapproved)

No. 307 (Submitted by Department of California)

UNITED STATES FLAG DESECRATION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to propose to the states an amendment to the Constitution of the United States which specifies that Congress and the states have the power to prohibit the physical desecration of the United States flag. (Approved)

No. 308 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

REQUEST FOR CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW
OF THE FEDERAL FLAG CODE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon our representatives in the Congress of the United States to have a complete review of the existing Federal Flag Code so that we secure consistent respect for the flag of the United States of America. (Approved)

No. 309 (Submitted by Department of Maryland)

KOREAN WAR VETERANS NATIONAL CHARTER

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support and recommend passage of #HR1671 to grant a Congressional Charter by the House of Representatives to the Korean War Veterans Association; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, we allow the Association the privilege of bargaining rights in Washington equal to all other Veterans Organizations. (Approved)

No. 310 (Submitted by Department of New Jersey)

THE SPIRIT OF PATRIOTISM CRUSADE

(Disapproved)

**CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND
FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND POW/MIA**

No. 401 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT PUBLIC AWARENESS PROJECTS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the National Organization will:

(a) Ensure routine distribution to the field of pertinent, credible and responsible information on a routine basis and, as requested, to provide such information about other POW/MIA organizations as may be needed by the Departments.

(b) Encourage participation in the program by veterans groups of other friendly nations such as our NATO and Far Eastern allies.

(c) Encourage exchange of information among State POW/MIA Chairmen to include publishing up-to-date lists of POW/MIA Chairmen; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that each Department exercise maximum initiative to maintain the vitality and thrust of the POW/MIA program at Department levels by encouraging such actions as:

(a) Display of the black POW/MIA flag, subordinate to the U.S. Flag, at any function at which it is proper to fly the U.S. Flag.

(b) Encourage support of information exchange at Post levels.

(c) Appoint an interested member at the Post level to act as the POW/MIA project officer; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the National Organization of the VFW supports the annual POW/MIA Recognition Day and the annual former POW Recognition Day. (Approved as Amended)

No. 402 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SEEK OPPORTUNITIES TO RESOLVE
THE KOREAN WAR POW/MIA ISSUE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United

States, that the VFW urges North Korea to honor the current year's agreement to resume joint recovery activities in North Korea and continue the process of accounting for Americans still missing from the Korean War; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that with renewed vigor, the VFW urges the U.S. and Republic of Korea governments in coordination with the United Nations command Korea to increase their contact with the North Korea and Chinese governments, to pursue and expand the current joint effort to include the live POW issue and thus seek new opportunities to resolve this humanitarian issue as soon as possible; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we, in keeping with United States laws and in consultation with the Republic of Korea and U.S. governments, continue our contact with North Korea to encourage a resolution of the current dispute and press for a renewal of the accounting of the over 8,100 Americans still missing and the investigation of reports of live Americans. (Approved as Amended)

No. 403 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VFW SUPPORTS KUWAIT'S DEMAND FOR AN ACCOUNTING OF ITS MIAS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign of the United States, that we strongly urge the United Nations, the United States government and other governments to take such action as necessary either unilaterally, through our allies, or the United Nations, that will force Iraq to account for those Kuwaiti citizens still missing. (Approved)

No. 404 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

THE LESSONS OF THE COLD WAR

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the lessons of the Cold and Gulf Wars taught us that our peace, our freedom and our security can best be achieved by remaining united in common purpose with our many allies and friends whereby we share both the danger and security burden and by maintaining a national defense which in combination with our allies and friends, is equal to those continuing threats; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in contrast to the Korean and Vietnamese Wars, the lessons of the Gulf War are apparent: To ensure victory in future wars, the United States, led by resolute leadership and backed by unwavering public support, should quickly and decisively engage the full range of its military power until the threat to our security is eliminated. (Approved)

No. 405 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

LIMIT FOREIGN OWNERSHIP OF U.S. BUSINESSES AND PROPERTIES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress to enact legislation to limit foreign ownership of United States corporations, companies, businesses and property, and industrial technologies and/or processes which could become vital or sensitive to the national defense of the U.S. and which will protect the economy of the United States. (Approved)

No. 406 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

TAKE ACTION ON THE IMMIGRATION PROBLEM

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the President and the Congress in the strongest terms to heed these ominous warnings and focus their attention on solving the illegal immigration problem; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we petition the President and the Congress to expand and strengthen the Customs and Immigration Services, the Border Patrol and the U.S. Coast Guard, and enact such emergency measures as necessary to prevent illegal aliens from entering the United States; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, when required, that well trained and supervised military resources be employed to assist other government agencies in stopping the flow of illegal aliens into the country. (Approved as Amended)

No. 407 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

TIME IS RUNNING OUT FOR CASTRO

(Disapproved)

No. 408 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

PUNISH TERRORISTS NOW

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we continue to urge the U.S. to take decisive action against all terrorists and bring to justice those responsible for terrorist acts to serve as a warning to all terrorists that - no matter what country gives them refuge - they will be hunted down and brought to justice; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we continue to urge decisive action in the war on terrorism by:

(a) Remaining on the offensive against terrorists rather than pas-

sively remaining on the defense.

(b) Instituting and pressing our allies to support a quarantine on those "rogue or outlaw states" guilty of inciting, harboring , or aiding and abetting terrorists.

(c) Holding all countries accountable for the security of American citizens traveling within their borders; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress should authorize and the Administration should take strong and decisive action against "outlaw" countries and states that are found to sponsor, support, and harbor terrorists; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that our civilian leaders and military commanders should take all necessary steps to ensure U.S. servicemen and women stationed abroad are adequately protected against the threat of terrorist attacks and that both foreign governments and U.S. authorities be held accountable for such lapses in security that endanger the lives of our servicemen and women. (Approved as Amended)

No. 409 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

STRATEGIC DEFENSE IS A STRATEGIC PRIORITY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the deployment of both a deployable theater ballistic missile defense and a strategic ballistic missile defense system as soon as possible as a priority defense requirement. (Approved as Amended)

No. 410 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

HONORING THOSE WHO SERVE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the VFW calls on all elected and appointed officials to publicly recognize the major contributions and sacrifices made by those in military service; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that our elected and appointed officials acknowledge the professionalism of our servicemen and women by ending the erosion of entitlements and expanding the benefits of service and by so doing, show that this nation cares for those who unselfishly served and sacrificed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call on our elected officials to provide military pay raises that continue to close the "pay gap" between the military and private sector. (Approved)

No. 411 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE LIFTING THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT BAN

ON HOMOSEXUALS IN THE ARMED FORCES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we unequivocally oppose the efforts of homosexual organizations and other organizations to force the military services to accept and/or retain homosexuals and urge that federal law (10 USC section 654) and implementing DOD policy which provides for the discharge of those engaging in homosexual conduct be consistently and properly enforced; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Uniformed Code of Military Justice should be reviewed and, if necessary, revised in an effort to eliminate any possible question that any denial of civil rights is based on moral, religious or ethical behavior and that there is no intent to deny civil rights to any service member, rather our concern is to maintain the good order, discipline and readiness of our armed forces and their ability to operate effectively. (Approved)

No. 412 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

MAINTAIN AN EFFECTIVE U.S. COAST GUARD

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress and the Administration to provide the funding necessary for modernization and recapitalization of the Coast Guard to carry out its mission and enable the Service take full advantage of modern information technology, including but not limited to, drug interdiction and enforcement, pollution control, maritime safety, search and rescue missions, and maintaining military readiness as well as its many other duties and responsibilities.

(Approved as Amended)

No. 413 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

STANDING FIRM FOR DEMOCRACY AND LIBERTY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we will always stand firm for liberty, and in furtherance of the ideals of liberty and democracy, we support a foreign policy that nourishes the newly won liberties in Europe and elsewhere, and we maintain our military strength against both the possibility of the reversal of Europe's liberties and the threats to other important regions of the world.

(Approved)

No. 414 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

NATIONAL STRATEGY OF PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we continue to support a national strategy of peace through strength, the general principles of which should be:

(a) Maintaining a strong economy at home and protecting our overseas resources of energy and vital raw materials.

(b) Maintaining an American military presence in Europe and Asia to stabilize the military balance in these regions and help our friends and allies to defend themselves from aggression.

(c) Maintaining such strategic, nuclear and conventional military forces (including Active, Reserve and National Guard components) trained and equipped with such high technology weapons and equipment and with sufficient bases and infrastructure which in the judgment of our military leaders are more than equal to the current threats and adequate to meet our current defense requirements.

(d) Helping formerly communist controlled countries in their process of converting to freely elected democratic governments.

(e) Maintaining effective security and intelligence capabilities to prevent strategic surprise from any quarter.

(f) Employing the leadership necessary to inspire, focus and unite the national will and international unity to further our goal of peace and freedom.

(g) Maintaining alliances as required by our national strategy, protect our national interests, support our friends and promote peace. (Approved)

No. 415 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

HALT THE EROSION OF INTELLIGENCE SERVICES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we reject deep reductions in our national intelligence agencies, instead supporting appropriate expansion and funding to ensure that we will have adequate warnings of future political, military, economic or technological changes that would increase the risks to our national security and vital national interests abroad and that Congress appropriate necessary funds to strengthen the intelligence services. (Approved)

No. 416 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT FOR THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the government of the United States to increase its military aid and assistance to the Republic of Korea by providing modern state of the art weapons and technology to safeguard her freedom, and promote

the security in the Pacific and Asian regions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the United States, in concert with its allies, bring pressure to bear on North Korea to comply with the nuclear safeguard accord of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to be a responsible country in the community of nations and to come to the table for peaceful dialogue directly between South and North Korea. (Approved)

No. 417 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT WITHDRAWAL FROM BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that to prevent further endangerment to our troops, we support the view that unless unforeseen circumstances arise, the U.S. forces assigned to Operation Joint Forge should be gradually withdrawn from Bosnia-Herzegovina while transferring remaining responsibilities to other NATO members. (Approved)

No. 418 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ASSIST VIETNAM'S RECOVERY OF MIAs AS A SIGN OF GOOD FAITH

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that at each level of the VFW—National, Department, District, County Council, Post—strenuous efforts be made to collect any information which might be of value in determining the fate of Vietnam's 300,000 MIAs and of assistance in the recovery of their remains; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge all levels of the VFW to solicit all Vietnam veteran members (and non-members) for any information or material that could be used to determine the fate of Vietnamese MIAs and their graves. Such information and material include battlefield souvenirs, especially if they contain names or other identifying information; personal effects such as photos, letters or identification documents taken from casualties; sketch maps, photos, overlays (annotated with dates and locations if possible) which would be of help in identifying Vietnamese grave sites; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VFW National Headquarters publicize this effort and provide Departments with materials which might be used in further publicizing our efforts and that the VFW Washington Office act as the collecting point and repository of all such information obtained from our members and the public at large; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that on subsequent trips to the region by VFW National Officers, such information be turned over to Vietnamese authorities as an expression of our desire to assist them in recovering their MIAs and to encourage their greater effort in helping us reach the fullest possible accounting of our MIAs. (Approved)

No. 419 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE U. S. FORCES UNDER FOREIGN COMMAND

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose any plan or directive placing U.S. military forces under the command of foreign military officers including those who are operating exclusively under orders from the United Nations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress be urged to examine Presidential Decision Directive 25 to determine if any Constitutional authority has been misused, and if so, to find an appropriate remedy. (Approved)

No. 420 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT FOR THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA ON TAIWAN

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that while recognizing the settlement of the legitimacy question remains an issue between the two countries, we support and urge the admission of the Republic of China on Taiwan to the United Nations and other international bodies so those agencies can be useful in fostering a spirit of cooperation and assisting the resolution of the legitimacy question; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the President and the Congress of the United States to adhere strictly to the concepts of the Taiwan Relations Act by approving the sale to the Republic of China on Taiwan such state of the art military equipment, weapons and technology to include modern aircraft to the Republic of China on Taiwan as may be necessary to maintain adequate defense capabilities to provide for military balance and stability in the area; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the United States government to employ the full range of its economic, diplomatic and military influence if it is necessary to contain the overtly aggressive posture of the Peoples Republic of China and to use this influence to further the peaceful settlement of remaining disputes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Administration to reverse its departure from longtime U.S. policy and remove Taiwan from the FBI's list of hostile intelligence threats under the national security list for 1999-2000.

(Approved as Amended)

No. 421 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE DOWNSIZING THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT
POW/MISSING PERSONNEL OFFICE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Department of Defense to refrain from downsizing the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office because we believe such action would have a disastrous effect on achieving our goal of the fullest possible accounting of our POW/MIAs and would have the following dampening effects:

(a) It would slow the momentum of a POW/MIA effort that has taken years to develop.

(b) It would prevent us from taking full advantage of new opportunities that are becoming available to resolve this issue.

(c) It would send the wrong signal that the United States is downsizing its effort to recover our missing men to those countries where the search for our men still continues, or as in the case of North Korea, where the search has only recently begun and the effort is expanding; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we go on record as being adamantly and unalterably opposed to any Department of Defense downsizing of the effort or of the resources put into the effort to reach the fullest possible accounting of our missing personnel. (Approved as Amended)

No. 422 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

RETAIN THE SELECTIVE SERVICE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the VFW supports the ongoing existence of the Selective Service System and its necessary programs in its stand-by status and urges the United States Congress to provide the funds necessary to retain the Selective Service System; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Congress to shift appropriations oversight for the Selective Service System from the VA-HUD and Independent Agencies Appropriations Subcommittees to the Defense Appropriations Subcommittees of the House and Senate at the start of the Fiscal Year 2002 budget process.

(Approved as Amended)

No. 423 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

MONITOR THE PANAMA CANAL CAREFULLY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign of the United States, that we urge the President and the Congress to closely monitor conditions in the Republic of Panama, and be prepared to take the steps necessary to protect the Panama Canal and to ensure continued safe and efficient freedom of passage, and to continuously evaluate the conditions of Panama and the region with a view toward balancing the concerns and interests of

Panama, its neighbors and the United States. (Approved as Amended)

No. 424 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

KEEPING FAITH WITH THE AMERICAN MILITARY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Department of Defense and the Department of State to initiate changes to the Status of Forces Agreements, the Geneva Conventions and other international agreements to improve the legal protections for United States military personnel and their families serving in foreign countries; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Department of Defense and the Department of State to periodically provide written, factual assurances to the Congress, the public and our military that legal protections have been put in place to bring to trial those guilty of murder, execution or assassination of members of our military service in foreign lands; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Congress of the United States and the Administration find a solution and take the necessary steps to ensure that the El Salvador murders of LTC Picket and CPL Dawson are brought to trial and punished. (Approved)

No. 425 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT THE U.S. ARMY'S SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS
(Disapproved)

No. 426 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

NATO ENLARGEMENT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the enlargement of the NATO Alliance and the extension of the United States mutual defense commitment to the countries of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic as it is important to the security of that region, our own vital interests in the region as well as world peace; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this enlargement be accomplished in a non-threatening manner so as not to force other countries into an opposing alliance and that in order to project a peaceful image we urge consideration be given to adoption of a declared policy that U.S. forces and weapons will not be stationed, based or deployed (except for training) in the countries of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that any future enlargement of NATO beyond the countries of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic be

approached with careful analysis as to the costs, benefits and risks involved.
(Approved)

No. 427 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

REQUIRE ALL EIGHTEEN YEAR OLD CITIZENS TO REGISTER
FOR MILITARY DRAFT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we request the President of the United States and the Congress of the United States to support legislation that would require all United States citizens, both male and female, be required to register for the Military Draft upon reaching their 18th birthday.
(Approved as Amended)

No. 428 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

TIGHTEN U.S. POLICY ON HIGH TECHNOLOGY EXPORTS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge the President and the Congress to reverse the present U.S. policy on exporting American advanced "dual-use" technologies and supercomputers to China and Russia, and strengthen the rules that limit the export of American "dual-use" technologies to any country that poses a possible ballistic missile or any other significant threat to the U.S.; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Administration stop any U.S. commercial activity which facilitates the improvement of Chinese ballistic missile capability, and provides any information or technology that would provide new military capability, including any long- range missile technology, to any country that poses a significant threat to our nation without prior U.S. government authorization. (Approved)

No. 429 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENSE FOR THE UNITED STATES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Administration and the Congress of the United States to immediately accelerate efforts to develop and deploy a National Missile Defense System to protect the United States against an accidental or unauthorized ballistic missile launch; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Administration and the Congress to take immediate actions to stop the proliferation of ballistic missiles and technologies to any potentially hostile or rogue states and terrorist groups that may seek to target the United States directly with long-

range missiles. (Approved)

No. 430 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

INCREASE THE DEFENSE BUDGET

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the president and the Congress of the United States to take whatever steps are necessary to increase defense spending to a realistic level that will begin to reverse the fourteen-year pattern of declining defense budgets; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in light of the first federal budget surplus in three decades, and the current strength of the U.S. economy, we urge the nation's bipartisan political leadership to reopen negotiations on the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 in order to provide for a reallocation of national resources to the defense budget, and to sustain a period of real growth in defense spending. (Approved)

No. 431 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

RESTORE PRE-ATTACK RANKS TO ADMIRAL HUSBAND E. KIMMEL AND GENERAL WALTER C. SHORT

(Disapproved)

No. 432 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT OF SELF-DETERMINATION FOR PUERTO RICO

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to pass a bill to support self-determination for Puerto Rico.
(Approved)

No. 433 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

INTERMENT OF AN UNKNOWN FROM VIETNAM

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we view the Tomb of the Unknown Serviceman of the Vietnam War as a powerful place, symbolic of the sacrifices of all who served in that most divisive war and believe the tomb has come to be recognized and revered by the American people as the place they can come to honor all of America's military heroes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if there are other remains that in all likelihood cannot be identified by known forensic medical techniques,

and after all means of identification have been exhausted, the U.S. government make every effort to inter one of our unknown honored dead from the Vietnam War to rest in peace along side his comrades from World War I, World War II and the Korean War in this hallowed ground.
(Approved as Amended)

No. 434 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

IMPROVE MILITARY READINESS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the President and the Congress of the United States to act now to reverse this trend in decreasing defense readiness by providing our military leaders with the resources required to accomplish their missions and the military strategy of the United States; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, in order to improve the morale and retention of our high quality, dedicated American servicemen and women, that the Congress and the Administration take action to stop the erosion of military entitlements and benefits, and restore military retirement benefits to the level that existed prior to 1986. (Approved)

No. 435 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ACCOUNTING AND RELEASE OF POW/MIA INFORMATION

(Disapproved)

No. 436 (Submitted by Commander-in -Chief)

SUPPORT THE KOSOVO PEACE AGREEMENT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we support the terms of the NATO/Yugoslavian Peace Agreement and Implementation Plan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge NATO and the United States to give careful consideration to the formation of a NATO Kosovo peace keeping force to guarantee the Kosovar people freedom from oppression and the right to self determination; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Administration to develop a plan for the replacement of all U.S. troops serving in the International/NATO Kosovo peacekeeping force or Kovoso Force (KFOR) with troops from other NATO countries as soon as possible; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we encourage the Administration to develop an exit strategy for the eventual withdrawal of all U.S. troops from the Balkan region. (Approved)

No. 437 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

STRENGTHEN SECURITY AT DOE LABORATORIES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon Congress to require mandatory FBI background checks of employees at the Energy Department weapons laboratories; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to implement stronger security measures, and enact legislation necessary to preserve our national security against all foreign nations. (Approved)

No. 438 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

INCREASE MILITARY BASE PAY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support all congressional efforts to immediately initiate and then continue annual pay raises for all grades and ranks that are higher than inflation until the 13 percent pay gap is closed. (Approved)

No. 439 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE GENDER INTEGRATED BASIC TRAINING

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge the Administration to consider the results of the Kassebaum-Baker study and the results of the Congressional Commission survey and reinstate separate sex basic training in the Army, the Air Force and the Navy; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we encourage the Department of Defense and the services to take the necessary steps to restore discipline in basic training by lifting unrealistic and counter productive restrictions from drill instructors and other recruit trainers. (Approved)

No. 440 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

U.S. RESPONSE TO CHINESE THREAT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans Of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the administration to change its current unsuccessful policy towards China and develop a new policy that demonstrates resolve and leadership in responding to the challenge of China's growing missile forces and its anti-missile defense campaign aimed at the United States and its allies in Asia; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the administration to offer a full assessment of China's future missile development plans to

Congress and the American people and state that it is China's missiles, not U.S. missile defenses, that threaten peace in Asia; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, we urge the administration and Congress of the United States to work together to rapidly deploy a national missile defense system and theater missile defense system to defend Americans from future missile attacks by any nation and to strengthen U.S. alliances in Asia. (Approved)

No. 441 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

AWARD ARMED FORCES EXPEDITIONARY MEDAL
FOR SERVICE IN KOREA

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition for an award of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (AFEM) to U.S. military personnel for service in Korea from July 28, 1954, through September 30, 1966, and from July 1, 1974, to a date to be determined. (Approved)

No. 442 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

AUTHORIZATION TO WEAR THE BUNDERWEHR AND
THE LAND BERLIN UNIT CITATIONS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition U.S. Congress to authorize these two awards and the wearing of these two unit citations to U.S. veterans of Berlin from May 1945 to September 1994. (Approved)

No. 443 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

AMERICANS WHO ARE
PRISONERS OF WAR OR MISSING IN ACTION

(Disapproved)

No. 444 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT F-22 FIGHTER AIRCRAFT PROGRAM

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress of the United States to provide full funding to the U.S. Air Force F-22 fighter aircraft program to ensure that the United States armed forces always achieves air superiority in any future incident, conflict, or war. (Approved as Amended)

No. 445 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

DISPLAY THE POW/MIA FLAG

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we urge the government of the United States to strictly enforce the existing public law and require all government agencies to fly the POW/MIA flag on the required occasions as well as everyday the American flag is displayed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we encourage the Secretary General of the United Nations to request that the POW/MIA flag be flown at the U.N. Headquarters in New York City as a reminder to all member nations that many persons are still missing from past wars; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this POW/MIA flag be flown by federal agencies, state and local governments to serve as a reminder to all U.S. citizens and nations worldwide that accounting for missing Americans from past wars is our highest priority. (Approved as Amended)

No. 446 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

RETENTION OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES UNIVERSITY OF THE
HEALTH SCIENCES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (DOD)

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Congress of the United States of America to guarantee continuation of the USUHS in perpetuity. (Approved)

No. 447 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ELIMINATE THE ANTI-BALLISTIC MISSILE TREATY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans Of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the administration to change its policy and drop its rigid adherence to the ABM Treaty, and to drop its plans to renegotiate the ABM Treaty with Russia; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the administration and Congress of the United States to take action as required to eliminate the ABM Treaty as a binding agreement because the Soviet Union no longer exists as a country and continued adherence to the terms of the treaty restricts the development, testing, and deployment of both the national and theater defense missile systems that are needed to protect deployed U.S. military forces and the United States and its citizens against emerging threats to our national security. (Approved)

No. 448 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

IMPROVE THEATER BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans Of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the administration and the Congress of the United States to work together to field the best, most capable theater missile defense system to protect deployed U.S military forces and their families as soon as possible. (Approved)

No. 449 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT THE DEATH PENALTY FOR ACTS OF TREASON, IN WAR AND PEACE, AGAINST THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that when justified by the nature of the crime, we support capital punishment for those who commit acts of espionage or treason against this nation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we support federal laws that allow the courts to sentence those convicted of treason or espionage against the United States in accordance with the nature of the crime. (Approved)

No. 450 (Submitted by Department of Massachusetts)

AMERICAN FLAGS ONLY FOR FALLEN WARRIORS OF THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we are firm and united in our demand for legislation establishing the right of every fallen member of the armed forces of the United States to have his casket draped with the flag of the United States immediately upon departure from a foreign country, and that the law restrict the use of flags or symbols of other nations or international organizations upon their caskets. (Approved as Amended)

No. 451 (Submitted by Department of Kentucky)

AWARD THE ARMY OF OCCUPATION SERVICE MEDAL FOR SERVICE IN TRIESTE, ITALY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the United States Congress to rectify this injustice by awarding the Army of Occupation Service Medal to those who served in Trieste, Italy with the U.S. Army from 8 May 1945 – 26 October 1954. (Approved)

No. 452 (Submitted by Department of New Jersey)

THE SPIRIT OF PATRIOTISM CRUSADE

(Disapproved)

No. 453 (Submitted by Department of Pennsylvania)

ACCOUNTING AND RELEASE OF POW/MIA INFORMATION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge our United States government to release all pertinent information about missing American servicemen to family members and to the public; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we vigorously pursue all possible avenues on POW/MIA accounting and remain focused on our goal of achieving the fullest possible accounting of Americans missing from our entire nation's past wars.

(Approved as Amended)

No. 454 (Submitted by Department of Pennsylvania)

MAINTAIN PRESSURE ON CASTRO

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the U.S. government to continue its present policy of no trade with Communist Cuba and no diplomatic recognition of that communist state and to increase the economic and political pressure on Castro; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the U.S. government to use all measures, short of violence and/or invasion, to isolate and maintain pressure on Castro to hasten the time until Castro's dictatorship is overthrown and Cuba can regain its freedom.

(Approved as Amended)

No. 455 (Submitted by Department of Pennsylvania)

UNIVERSAL MILITARY TRAINING

(Disapproved)

No. 456 (Submitted by Department of Virginia)

AMERICANS WHO ARE PRISONERS OF WAR OR MISSING IN ACTION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United

States, that we urge the President of the United States of America, senior government officials, and every member of the U.S. Congress to speak out on every occasion to expedite the return of those U.S. servicemen who are still prisoners of war or missing in action. (Approved as Amended)

No. 457 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

A FULL ACCOUNTING FOR COMMANDER SPEICHER

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Administration and Congress to continue an aggressive investigation into Commander Speicher's fate until either he is recovered alive, his remains are recovered and identified, or until a full accounting of his fate can be determined; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the government of Iraq to cooperate with the United States in the effort to account for Commander Speicher. (Approved)

No. 458 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

INCREASE CENTRAL IDENTIFICATION LABORATORY CAPABILITY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Department of Defense to conduct a comprehensive review of the Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii to include its mission, tasks, work load, operational requirements, and resources. (Approved)

No. 459 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE LIFTING ECONOMIC SANCTIONS AGAINST NORTH KOREA

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose the lifting of economic sanctions against North Korea until such action is adequately justified by meaningful changes in North Korean policy and actions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Administration and the Congress of the United States to closely review North Korean activities and behavior, and closely consult with the Republic of Korea and our other allies in the region before considering any future policy changes with North Korea. (Approved)

No. 460 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE PERMANENT NORMAL TRADE RELATIONS WITH CHINA

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose the establishment of Permanent Normal Trade Relations with the People's Republic of China at this time; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we encourage the Administration and the Congress of the United States to continue the annual process of reviewing normal trade relations with China until such time that China changes its policies, improves its human rights record, and demonstrates that it is willing to be an "equal trading partner" with the United States. (Approved)

No. 461 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE THE COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN TREATY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty by the Senate of the United States; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we support arms control that is pursued according to strict standards and with the recognition of its inherent limitations, and we encourage the Administration and Congress to closely review the history of America's arms control agreements before endorsing any future arms control treaties. (Approved)

No. 462 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

RESTORE VIEQUES NAVAL RANGES TO FULL USE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call for restoring the full use of the U.S. Naval ranges at VIEQUES to full use with the goal of returning our Atlantic Fleet forward deployed Naval forces to acceptable levels of combat readiness; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we petition the Administration and the Congress of the United States to never again permit a peremptory action, such as

the decision to suspend the training at VIEQUES, to be taken that jeopardizes the combat readiness of the nation's armed forces. (Approved)

No. 463 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT INCREASED SHIPBUILDING FOR THE U.S. NAVY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Administration and Congress to immediately increase Navy shipbuilding to the point where the U.S. can at least sustain and possibly increase the current number of ships in the fleet; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Administration and

the Congress of the United States to closely review the results of the latest studies and restore the U.S. Navy fleet to the level that is required to support our national military strategy, achieve our national objectives, and adequately protect the United States without an unnecessary level of risk. (Approved)

No. 464 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT THE NATION'S WAR ON DRUGS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Administration and Congress to follow the *National Drug Control Strategy* and apply increased emphasis, energy, and resources towards winning the war on drugs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge the Administration and the Congress of the United States to closely review the results of the latest studies and focus the effort on educating the youth of America on the dangers and pitfalls of illegal drug use and other chemical dependency problems. (Approved)

No. 465 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE ASSIGNING WOMEN IN DIRECT COMBAT ROLES

(Disapproved)

No. 466 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT FORMER POW SLAVE LABOR CLAIMS AGAINST JAPANESE FIRMS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans Of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support fair and just compensation for the injuries suffered by all American POWs at the hands of their Japanese captors, and the slave labor they were forced to perform by private Japanese companies during World War II. (Approved)

No. 467 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT NEW INSTITUTE FOR TRAINING LATIN AMERICAN MILITARY PERSONNEL

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to authorize and fully fund, as soon as possible, a new Department of Defense institute that will be an important instrument in training and educating Latin American military personnel and

thereby serve as an instrument for strengthening democracy in the Americas. (Approved)

CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

No. 601 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SEXUAL TRAUMA TREATMENT FOR ALL VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that there will be permanent VA programs established for veterans who need sexual trauma treatment; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars insists there be absolutely no limitations or restrictions to VA sexual trauma treatment services thereby making sexual trauma treatment available to all veterans of the Armed Forces regardless of their length of service or reserve status. (Approved)

No. 602 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ADEQUATELY FUND THE VETERANS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress in its annual appropriations, to fund the Department of Veterans Affairs construction to allow it to carry out a program of modernization and replacement of aging facilities, which includes a sound system for setting construction priorities, which in combination will ensure the continued provision of quality health care to our nation's veterans. (Approved)

No. 603 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BUDGET

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress of the United States to pass a budget and appropriations for the Department of Veterans Affairs which will fully fund and maintain the integrity of the benefits and entitlements programs and enhance the health care system.
(Approved as Amended)

No. 604 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

AMEND THE UNIFORMED SERVICES FORMER SPOUSES' PROTECTION ACT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the VFW seeks to amend Public Law 97-252, the "*Former Spouses' Protection Act*," to allow for the termination of court-ordered payments to ex-military spouses upon remarriage; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we seek legislation that would prohibit forcing a service member from making payments to his former spouse on the date the service member first becomes eligible to receive retired pay if the service member elects to remain in the service; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we seek legislation that ensures any increase in retired pay resulting from increased service or promotion after a divorce is final becomes the sole property of the service member. (Approved)

No. 605 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

CONCURRENT RECEIPT OF RETIREMENT PAY AND VETERANS DISABILITY COMPENSATION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly advocate legislation to be enacted to permit the concurrent receipt of longevity military retirement pay without reduction of the Department of Veterans Affairs disability compensation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we also support legislation that initially limits the disability categories and/or the dollar amount of offset, with the final goal of having all disabled retirees receive full concurrent receipt of all money. (Approved)

No. 606 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

AMENDED TAX RETURNS FOR MILITARY RETIREES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge Congress to amend current law whereby a military retiree will be allowed to file amended tax returns involving receipt of VA disability compensation beyond the current three (3) year limitation. (Approved)

No. 607 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EXCLUDE GUARD AND RESERVE INCOME WHEN DETERMINING ELI- GIBILITY FOR UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to enact legislation that standardizes Unemployment Insurance eligibility rules to the extent that Guard and

Reserve income will be excluded for purposes of determining eligibility for Unemployment Insurance. (Approved)

No. 608 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM TO REMAIN A
NATIONAL MANDATE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose any such elimination of Federal direction and control over the employment assistance entitlements earned by America's veterans through their honorable service.
(Approved)

No. 609 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

FEDERAL EMPLOYEES HEALTH BENEFIT PROGRAM (FEHBP) FOR
MILITARY RETIREES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress to enact legislation requiring the Department of Defense to offer military retirees the full range of FEHBP under the same terms as do all other federal departments, agencies and the postal service; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we also support legislation that initially limits FEHBP to only Medicare eligible retirees with the ultimate goal of allowing all retirees to participate in the program. (Approved)

No. 610 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

THIRD-PARTY REIMBURSEMENT WITHOUT OFFSET

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Administration and Congress to authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs to collect and retain all third-party reimbursements without offset from its appropriation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge that legislation be enacted to make up any Medical Care Cost Recovery (MCCR) shortfall with emergency supplemental appropriations. (Approved)

No. 611 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ENTITLEMENT TO NURSING HOME CARE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to mandate and provide funding for the pro-

vision of nursing home care for all veterans. (Approved as Amended)

No. 612 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

RECEIPT OF COMPENSATION OR DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY
COMPENSATION BASED ON PERSONAL INCOME

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to categorically reject any proposal to base the receipt of compensation or DIC on personal income considerations ("means-testing"), or even to support any potential study on the prospects of means-testing these benefits. (Approved)

No. 613 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

PRESUMPTION OF SERVICE CONNECTION FOR
RADIATION RELATED DISABILITIES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to enact legislation which provides for a statutory presumption of service connection of the radiation-related disabilities to include lung cancer, bone cancer, skin cancer, colon cancer, posterior subcapsular cataracts, nonmalignant thyroid nodular disease, ovarian cancer, parathyroid adenoma, tumors of the brain and central nervous system, and rectal cancer. (Approved)

No. 614 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT AN EFFECTIVE VETERANS EMPLOYMENT
AND TRAINING SERVICE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support a viable and effective Veterans Employment and Training Service which has necessary funding and capability to assist veterans in seeking and maintaining meaningful employment and re-employment opportunities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that "VETS" be held accountable in ensuring that veterans receive priority of service in all federally funded job training programs.
(Approved)

No. 615 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE TERMINATION DATE FOR THE GULF WAR AS RECOMENDED
BY THE COMMISSION ON SERVICEMEMBERS AND
VETERANS' TRANSITION ASSISTANCE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the VFW opposes any legislation to establish a termination date for the Persian Gulf War until there is an end to the current hostilities. (Approved)

No. 616 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

IMPROVED VA HOSPITAL FACILITIES FOR WOMEN VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to provide funding to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for the purpose of improving the quality of hospital facilities and services available to women veterans at VA hospitals. (Approved as Amended)

No. 617 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

FUNDING FEE FOR VA HOME LOANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to repeal the VA Home Loan funding fee. (Approved)

No. 618 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

NECESSARY FUNDING FOR THE LOCAL VETERANS EMPLOYMENT REPRESENTATIVES (LVERs) AND DISABLED VETERANS OUTREACH PROGRAM SPECIALISTS (DVOPs)

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress of the United States to appropriate sufficient funds to support the number of LVERs and DVOPs positions as required by Title 38. (Approved)

No. 619 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT PRIORITY OF SERVICE FOR VETERANS TO ALL FEDERALLY FUNDED JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress to enact legislation which will mandate priority of service to all eligible veterans in federally funded job training programs. (Approved)

No. 620 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE PERMANENT EXTENSION OF CERTAIN OBRA PROVISIONS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we are opposed to further extending VA's authority to round-down cost-of-living allowances for disability compensation, and dependency and indemnity compensation.
(Approved as Amended)

No. 621 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

COST-OF-LIVING INCREASE FOR VA BENEFICIARIES
AND MILITARY RETIREES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to provide timely annual increases in an amount at least commensurate with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for all Department of Veterans Affairs' beneficiaries and military retirees.
(Approved)

No. 622 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VA MEDICARE SUBVENTION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the swift enactment into law of legislation authorizing VA to collect and retain all Medicare dollars. (Approved as Amended)

No. 623 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EXCLUSIVE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEES FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA)

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress to establish separate appropriations subcommittees exclusive to the Department of Veterans Affairs in both the House and Senate. (Approved)

No. 624 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

FUNDING OF SBA VETERANS PROGRAMS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the strengthening and sufficient funding of an effective

tive veterans entrepreneurship program in the United States Small Business Administration.

(Approved)

No. 625 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT FOR GULF WAR VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we continue to urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish an open ended presumptive period until the medical and scientific community determines an appropriate time in which conditions associated with Gulf War service will manifest; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide health care for all active duty military and veterans, and their dependents and survivors, whose health has been adversely affected by the Persian Gulf War, and to conduct all necessary tests to determine the causes of these illnesses; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, veterans of the Gulf War be afforded the same rights and privileges guaranteed to all other veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to act in accordance with Title 38 USC, section 1117, and develop, at the earliest possible date, appropriate definitions or diagnoses of the illnesses associated with service in the Persian Gulf; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to adequately fund appropriate medical and scientific research, and the Departments of Defense, Health and Human Services, and Veterans Affairs to implement all relevant laws that support all research efforts; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Departments of Defense, Health and Human Service, and Veterans Affairs and the Congress to fund appropriate research into the causes of these illnesses; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW continue to closely monitor this issue and urge appropriate corrective action when necessary to assist Gulf War veterans and their families. (Approved as Amended)

No. 626 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EXEMPT VA DISABILITY COMPENSATION IN DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR HUD'S "ASSISTED SENIOR HOUSING PROGRAM"

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the Department of Housing and Urban Development not consider VA disability compensations as income when determining eligibility for their "Assisted Senior Housing Program." (Approved)

No. 627 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

DISABILITY RATING SCHEDULE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to reject any suggestion that it direct economic validation studies to intrude on the discretion exercised by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs in adopting or revising the "Schedule for Rating Disabilities." (Approved)

No. 628 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT FOR THE GUARD AND RESERVE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the provisions of the "Uniformed Service Employment and Re-Employment Rights Act" be strictly enforced; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, we support the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve in its efforts to educate employers on the ever-increasing importance of the National Guard and Reserve and their responsibilities as mandated by USERRA. (Approved)

No. 629 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING ALLOWANCE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we seek legislation to amend 38 U.S.C. § 2102 to allow a veteran to qualify for a second allowance. (Approved)

No. 630 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SERVICE CONNECTION FOR HEARING LOSS AND TINNITUS FOR COMBAT VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we request Congress to enact legislation that will authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to grant service connection to veterans with documented combat service and who have been diagnosed with hearing loss or tinnitus at any time after discharge from military service. (Approved)

No. 631 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge a standardized licensure and certification requirement be adopted by the appropriate federal and state agencies in all 50 states; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that recently separated service members be afforded the opportunity to take licensing and certification exams without a period of retraining. (Approved)

No. 632 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

TEMPORARY TOTAL COMPENSATION AWARDS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to amend the law to authorize increased compensation on the basis of temporary total rating for hospitalization or convalescence to be effective, for payment purposes, on the date of admission to the hospital or the date of treatment, surgery, or other circumstances necessitating convalescence. (Approved)

No. 633 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

RESEARCH ON THE HEALTH EFFECTS OF DEPLETED URANIUM AND IMPLEMENTATION OF AN EDUCATION AND SAFETY TRAINING PROGRAM FOR ALL GROUND TROOPS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we request the Secretary of Defense to immediately direct and verify the full implementation of the Depleted Uranium training program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an independent, non-profit scientific organization, under federal contract from the Department of Veteran Affairs, conduct appropriate studies regarding the health effects of DU, with additional instructions to review and evaluate all other agencies' scientific studies regarding DU, for the purpose of issuing a comprehensive report identifying the health effects related to use of DU. (Approved)

No. 634 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE STAFF REDUCTIONS FOR THE VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION (VBA)

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to include sufficient funding in future VA appropriations to avoid any future reductions in FTEE in the VBA.

(Approved)

No. 635 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EQUITY IN VA HEALTH CARE CO-PAYMENTS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to urge the VA to find a more equitable means to determine a non-service connected veteran's outpatient co-payment. (Approved)

No. 636 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

AMEND INTERNAL REVENUE CODE FOR STATE FINANCIAL VETERANS HOME MORTGAGES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation to amend IRS code of 1986 to allow veterans who served after January 1, 1977, in a military operation and who are authorized a military campaign medal, to qualify for the state veterans home mortgage bond program. (Approved)

No. 637 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT LEGISLATION PROVIDING ADDITIONAL BENEFITS AND SERVICES TO VIETNAM VETERANS CHILDREN WITH SPINA BIFIDA

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to amend the Agent Orange Benefits Act of 1996 to provide Vietnam veterans children with Spina Bifida Cystica with comprehensive health care coverage, attendant services, independent living services, up to 48 months of educational assistance, adaptive housing and transportation assistance; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Act be amended to include outreach and service coordination assistance to: (1) ensure that Vietnam veterans children with Spina Bifida and their families are aware of their eligibility for VA benefits and services and, when needed, in fully accessing such benefits; (2) assist such children in protecting Supplemental Security Insurance and other federal and federally-supported benefits and services from unwarranted reduction or termination due to the receipt of assistance under the Act; and (3) assist such children in accessing other specialized human services for persons with severe disabilities offered by federal, state, and local government agencies and other human services organizations. (Approved)

No. 638 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION ELIGIBILITY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to enact legislation to change Title 38 United States Code section 3102 to include veterans who are rated ten percent or more in the eligibility criteria for Vocational Rehabilitation. (Approved)

No. 639 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VA DEMONSTRATION PROJECT FOR ALZHEIMER'S FACILITY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the need for an Alzheimer's Facility for veterans, under a congressionally authorized demonstration project, through the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this demonstration project be a uniquely designed facility for veterans with Alzheimer's disease using other than the routine medical or psychiatric care models. The project should include Alzheimer's research as an integral part of the veterans treatment program. (Approved)

No. 640 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VA TO PAY THEIR FAIR SHARE OF CARING FOR VETERANS RESIDING IN STATE VETERANS HOMES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we support a VA per diem payment that equals 33.33% of the national average cost of providing care in a state veterans home; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Congress of the United States to fully fund the State Veterans Home Construction Grant Program, giving priority to projects from fiscal year 1999. (Approved)

No. 641 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

RESTORE GRANT IN AID HOSPITAL PROGRAM TO THE FILIPINO WORLD WAR II VETERANS IN THE PHILIPPINES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the President, and the Congress to restore the Grant In Aid Hospital Program under the management of the Manila Regional Office to assist in the medical treatment of surviving Philippine-based WWII veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all inequities proportioned at the time of the original suspension be evaluated so as to bring the Philippine

Veterans Memorial Medical Hospital in line with U.S. hospital standards and procedures. (Approved)

No. 642 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SERVICE CONNECTION FOR CHRONIC PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY
AND DIABETES AS A RESULT OF EXPOSURE TO AGENT ORANGE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we request Congress amend Title 38 United States Code to include Chronic Peripheral Neuropathy and Diabetes as presumption for service connection as a result of exposure to Agent Orange. (Approved)

No. 643 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

HOLD THE ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESS ACCOUNTABLE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call on this Administration and Congress to make veterans a priority with not only words, but with proper funding that will allow veterans access to quality health care in a timely manner; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW Commander-in-Chief take whatever measures he may deem necessary with the Administration, the Congress and the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that all VA programs for veterans and their dependents are fully funded and operational. (Approved)

No. 644 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

REPEAL THE REDUCTION OF COMPENSATION AND PENSION FOR
INCOMPETENT VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to repeal Title 38 United States Code Section 5503 (b)(1)(A), because the law has currently "outlived" its intended purpose and now actually discriminates against a group of veterans who cannot speak for themselves. (Approved)

No. 645 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VETERAN'S PREFERENCE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose all attempts to reduce or circumvent veterans' preference. (Approved)

No. 646 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that at least one veterans' advocate be placed on the State and Local Workforce Investment Act Boards; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, we request all one-stop centers created by the Workforce Investment Act provide priority of service to veterans. (Approved)

No. 647 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS (LOU GEHRIG'S DISEASE)
HIGH AMONG GULF WAR VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call for intensified medical and scientific research to determine the cause of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis among Gulf War veterans, and in the interim we urge Congress to grant a temporary presumption of service connection for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis for Persian Gulf War veterans until such time as the research is complete. (Approved)

No. 648 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ESTABLISHING A PRESUMPTION OF SERVICE CONNECTION FOR VETERANS SUFFERING FROM HEPATITIS "C"

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to authorize an open-ended presumption of service connection for veterans with Hepatitis C as a result of their military service. (Approved)

No. 649 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SOLVENCY FOR THE ARMED FORCES RETIREMENT HOMES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to support competitive bidding on an undeveloped 49 acre parcel of land at the United States Soldiers' and Airmen's Home after a professionally approved appraisal is accepted by the AFRHB; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, we urge that in conjunction with the above appraisal process, Congress ensure all active duty enlisted and warrant officers be required to contribute \$1.00 per month from their pay to the

AFRHB. Together, these actions will ensure solvency beyond 2004 for the AFRHB. (Approved)

No. 650 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

A GI BILL FOR THE 21st CENTURY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to enact a new GI Bill for the 21st Century which would provide an educational benefit that covers the cost of tuition, fees, books and related expenses along with a stipend to cover housing expenses. (Approved)

No. 651 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

HOMELESS VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress to fully fund all Veterans' Homeless Programs that are administered at the Federal level; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we encourage VFW Posts to join community-based organizations in addressing veterans homelessness. (Approved)

No. 652 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

COMPENSABLE DISABILITY FOR HEARING LOSS FOR VETERANS REQUIRING HEARING AIDS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge VA to amend the Schedule for Rating Disabilities to provide a minimum ten percent disability compensation evaluation for any service-connected hearing loss (unilateral or bilateral) requiring the use of a hearing aid. (Approved as Amended)

No. 653 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

REMOVAL OF THE LIMITATION ON PAYMENT OF ACCRUED BENEFITS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to enact legislation to remove the inequitable two-year limitation on payment of accrued benefits and instead make it open-ended. (Approved)

No. 654 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

INCLUDE DENTAL CARE AS PART OF VHA's
VETERANS UNIFORM BENEFITS PACKAGE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to authorize and fund VA to provide dental care to all enrolled veterans as a part of their Veterans Uniform Benefits Package. (Approved)

No. 655 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

ESTABLISH A VA ASSISTANCE OFFICE IN THE FEDERAL
REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we request the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish an assistance office in the Federal Republic of Germany to support U.S. citizens in Europe.
(Approved as Amended)

No. 656 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT PREFERENCE WITH THE U.S. GOVERNMENT
OVERSEAS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Department of State and the Department of Defense to ensure the protection of veterans' employment benefits in all future treaty negotiations, renegotiations, amendments, or adjustments of any nature.
(Approved as Amended)

No. 657 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

POST EXCHANGE AND COMMISSARY PRIVILEGES FOR
U.S. MILITARY RETIREES RESIDING OR TRAVELING OVERSEAS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to enact legislation requiring the Department of State and the Department of Defense to ensure the protection of exchange and commissary benefits for retirees of the U.S. armed forces in all future treaty negotiations, renegotiations, amendments, or adjustments of any nature. (Approved)

No. 658 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

TIMELY SURVIVORS' BENEFIT PROGRAM ENTITLEMENT PAYMENT TO
SURVIVORS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to enact legislation requiring the Department of Defense to ensure that each branch of the armed forces' servicing finance center releases the initial survivor's entitlement check immediately upon receipt of the SBP claim. (Approved)

No. 659 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

POSTAL PRIVILEGES FOR RETIREES

(Disapproved)

No. 660 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

CIVIL SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES STANDARDIZATION

(Disapproved)

No. 661 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

GUARANTEED U.S. ARMED FORCES MEDICAL SUPPORT FOR RETIREES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Congress of the United States of America to enact legislation requiring the Department of Defense to ensure that retirees of the U.S. armed forces and their eligible family members and dependents, receive guaranteed medical support by requiring each branch of the armed forces health services organization to provide the needed medical support as a secondary mission to providing medical support for the active duty population. (Approved)

No. 662 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

THE FUTURE OF PERSHING HALL

(Disapproved)

No. 663 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

ENFORCEMENT OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION WORLDWIDE

(Disapproved)

No. 664 (Submitted by Department of Montana)

REPEAL THE SOCIAL SECURITY REFORM ACT OF OCTOBER 1, 1982,
KNOWN AS THE "CATCH 62" BILL

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to repeal the Social Security Act of October 1, 1982, known as the "Catch 62" Bill, that penalizes veterans for their unselfish devotion to duty, honor and country during a time of recognized Armed conflict. (Approved as Amended)

No. 665 (Submitted by Department of North Dakota)

BURIAL CRITERIA FOR NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVISTS

(Disapproved)

No. 666 (Submitted by Department of District of Columbia)

RESTORE GRANT IN AID HOSPITAL PROGRAM TO THE FILIPINO
WORLD WAR II VETERANS IN THE PHILIPPINES

(Disapproved)

No. 667 (Submitted by Department of District of Columbia)

PROVIDE FOR THE MAINTENANCE AND UPKEEP OF THE CEMETERY
AT FORMER CLARK AIR BASE IN THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the United States government, by legislative or administrative action, to seek a long-term solution to the neglect of the Clark Cemetery; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that until a long-term solution is reached, the Veterans of Foreign Wars seek support from all available sources to assist the VFW Posts in the Philippines with the annual cost of the repair and upkeep of the Clark Cemetery.

(Approved)

No. 668 (Submitted by Department of District of Columbia)

BENEFITS FOR FILIPINO VETERANS AND SCOUTS WHO SERVED WITH
THE U.S. ARMED FORCES DURING WWII

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation to recognize veterans of the organized military forces of the government of the Commonwealth of the Philippines, while such forces were in the service of the armed forces of the United

States during WWII, as having been active service for purposes of equal benefits under programs administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we support additional legislation that directs the Secretary of the Army to issue a certificate of service to every national of the Philippine Islands deemed by the Secretary to have performed any military service in aid of the armed forces of the United States during WWII. (Approved)

No. 669 (Submitted by Department of District of Columbia)

SUPPORT A GULF WAR VETERANS MEMORIAL IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the creation of a Gulf War memorial commission to make recommendations regarding the creation of such a memorial recognizing the service of Gulf War veterans at the appropriate place and time. (Approved as Amended)

No. 670 (Submitted by Department of Idaho)

CHANGE PENSION ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS OF
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we request Congress to change the eligibility requirements to received pension benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs to include veterans who have received the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the Navy/Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal, the Purple Heart Medal, the Combat Infantry Badge, the Combat Medal Badge or the Combat Action Ribbon for operations not falling within an official currently designated period of war. (Approved as Amended)

No. 671 (Submitted by Department of Idaho)

ELIMINATING MEDICAID ELIGIBILITY FOR STATE VETERANS HOMES
PARTICIPATING IN THE VA STATE HOME PROGRAM

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to pass legislation preventing state veterans homes that participate in the VA State Home Program from participating in the Medicaid Program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the President and Congress to pledge their full support for taking the necessary steps to prevent America's heroes from being forced onto welfare rolls in order to gain admission to any state veterans home participating in the VA State Home

Program. (Approved)

No. 672 (Submitted by Department of New Jersey)

PLACE WORLD WAR II VETERANS IN ENROLLMENT PRIORITY CATEGORY SIX FOR VA HEALTH PURPOSES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to pass legislation to include all World War II veterans in at least enrollment priority category six for health care purposes. (Approved as Amended)

No. 673 (Submitted by Department of Ohio)

MERGER OF STATE AGENCIES AND WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT

(Disapproved)

No. 674 (Submitted by Department of Ohio)

VETERANS PREFERENCE, PRIORITY OF SERVICE
AND OTHER SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

(Disapproved)

No. 675 (Submitted by Department of Texas)

RETAIN NATIONWIDE PROGRAMS OF EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE
FOR AMERICA'S VETERANS/DISABLED VETERANS
AS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

(Disapproved)

No. 676 (Submitted by Department of Michigan)

A PRESIDENTIAL POSTHUMOUS PARDON FOR
PRIVATE EDWARD D. SLOVIK, U.S. ARMY

(Disapproved)

No. 677 (Submitted by Department of Michigan)

THE USE OF THE "BATTLEFIELD CROSS" IN NATIONAL CEMETERIES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Department of Veterans Affairs, National

Cemetery Administration, to amend their policy regarding the use of weapons of war to exclude the "Battlefield Cross" from this definition and allow its use in a proper and dignified manner as a memorial on the grounds of a national cemetery under their control. (Approved)

No. 678 (Submitted by Department of Michigan)

FURNISH HEADSTONES OR MARKERS FOR THE
MARKED GRAVES OF CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support and endorse the pursuit of legislation to amend Section 2306(a) of Title 38 USC by removing the word "unmarked." (Approved)

No. 679 (Submitted by Department of Michigan)

WORLD WAR ONE ERA FEDERAL WAR BONUS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Congress of the United States through its various members to adopt provision to honor surviving World War One Era veterans or their surviving spouses by paying a Federal War bonus of an amount to be determined by that body. (Approved)

No. 680 (Submitted by Department of Virginia)

REQUEST VA TO ESTABLISH A COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION AND
MONITORING PROGRAM FOR VETERANS EXPOSED TO VARIOUS
HEALTH HAZARDS WHILE IN THE MILITARY SERVICE

(Disapproved)

No. 681 (Submitted by Department of Washington)

RECOGNIZING AND HONORING THE U.S. NAVY GUN CREWS SERV-
ING ON U.S. SUPPLY SHIPS DURING WORLD WARS I AND II

(Disapproved)

No. 682 (Submitted by Department of Washington)

MEDAL OF HONOR

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to enact legislation to continue the Medal of

Honor pension to the recipient's surviving spouse. (Approved as Amended)

No. 683 (Submitted by Department of Connecticut)

EQUITY IN VA HEALTH CARE CO-PAYMENTS

(Disapproved)

No. 684 (Submitted by Department of Washington)

VETERANS RIGHT TO MEDICAL CARE

(Disapproved)

No. 685 (Submitted by Department of Washington)

VETERANS TRAVEL PAY

(Disapproved)

No. 686 (Submitted by Department of California)

CONSTRUCT A NATIONAL CEMETERY IN SACRAMENTO

(Disapproved)

No. 687 (Submitted by Department of California)

PRESERVATION OF THE NATIONAL SOLDIERS' HOME LOCATED
AT THE VA MEDICAL CENTER, WEST LOS ANGELES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we request the United States Congress to ensure adherence to the expressed wishes of the donors of said land, that the terms and consideration of the grant be adhered to, that the Pacific Branch of the National Soldiers' Home for disabled veterans be maintained on said property, that an opportunity be offered to those who were displaced from said National Soldiers' Home to return thereto, and that the admission requirements for entering the home revert back to the original status. (Approved)

No. 688 (Submitted by Department of Pacific Areas)

BENEFITS FOR SAIPAN MARINE SCOUTS WHO FOUGHT ALONG SIDE
OF U.S. FORCES DURING WORLD WAR II BATTLE OF SAIPAN

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United

States, that we support legislation to recognize the Saipan Marine Scouts who served along side of U.S. soldiers during the Battle of Saipan as having been active service for purposes of equal benefits under programs administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we support additional legislation that directs the Secretary of Defense to issue a certificate of service to every Saipan. (Approved)

No. 689 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VETERANS TRAVEL PAY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to repeal that section of Title 38 that authorizes deductibles from portions of travel pay made to VA patients. (Approved)

No. 690 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

REINSTATEMENT OF ELIGIBILITY TO DEATH PENSION FOR REMARRIED SURVIVING SPOUSE UPON TERMINATION OF REMARRIAGE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to immediately enact legislation to restore eligibility to death pension for a remarried surviving spouse upon the termination of a subsequent remarriage. (Approved)

No. 691 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SPECIAL COMPENSATION FOR SEVERELY DISABLED VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to amend Public Law 106-65 to allow for members of the uniformed services who retired after completing 20 years service and who meet the rest of the criteria outlined in the legislation to be authorized to draw special compensation notwithstanding that they were retired under the provisions of Chapter 61, Title 10 United States Code. (Approved)

No. 692 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

REIMBURSEMENT OF BURIAL ALLOWANCES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars that we urge Congress to pass legislation to increase the burial plot allowances for vet-

erans. (Approved)

No. 693 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

**ADEQUATELY FUND THE NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION
AND EXPAND BURIAL BENEFITS TO INCLUDE ALL VETERANS**

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to adequately fund the National Cemetery Administration system to meet the growing demands of an aging veteran population and expand burial benefits to include reservists and guard members not eligible under current statutes. (Approved)

NATIONAL CONVENTION COMMITTEES

**COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL BY-LAWS, MANUAL OF PROCEDURE
AND RITUAL**

Chairman: Paul A. Spera, Past Commander-in-Chief, Massachusetts

Vice Chairman: John J. Stang, Past Commander-in-Chief, Kansas

(Room 102C, Midwest Express Center)

Department	Name	Post No.
Alabama	Jack F. Ivy	2702
Alabama	Harold C. Robertson	3492
Alaska	Gerald J. Dorsher	5559
Arizona	Ronald E. Bubb	9972
Arizona	George K. Mead	9400
Arizona	Vincent J. Mitchell	9972
Arizona	Robert J. Rankin	9399
Arkansas	Joel P. Cockrill	5225
Arkansas	Charles O. Wilkison	4554
California	Samuel E. Gladden	3868
California	Steven D. Jacobs	5944
California	Raymond C. Sisk	9791
California	Peter J. Szabo	3928
California	Anthony A. Whatley	5991
Colorado	John J. Holland	1
Connecticut	Dominic J. Romano	7330
Delaware	Paul R. Phillips, Jr.	2863
Dist. of Col.	John P. Breen	2979
Europe	Jarold K. Stottlemire	10810
Florida	Raymond D. Brennan, Jr.	10131
Florida	Richard Fitzgerald	7721

Florida	Thomas Koulan	10209
Florida	Robert M. Sprute	5625
Georgia	Johnnie M. Shiver	4830
Hawaii	Norbert K. Enos	2875
Idaho	Wayne D. Lanier	2146
Illinois	Matthew M. Mihelcic	4183
Illinois	Tom Morgan	1592
Illinois	Terry W. Vance	9789
Indiana	Harley D. Andrews	6606
Indiana	Omar F. Kendall	673
Indiana	James D. Voelker	1114
Indiana	Roger B. Wise	6919
Iowa	Laurel E. Phipps	839
Iowa	Dannie Cooper	3822
Louisiana	Robert V. Martin	8973
Maine	Arthur W. Bentz	9459
Maine	Donald R. Libby, Jr.	832
Maryland	John J. Gistedt	2678
Maryland	James L. Youngblood	6694
Massachusetts	Gordon L. Crosby	1526
Massachusetts	Robert J. Gallagher	834
Massachusetts	William L. Mc Carthy	864
Michigan	Edmund R. Gucwa	6896
Michigan	John J. Harrow, Jr.	3724
Michigan	Lawrence Le Febvre	552
Michigan	James A. Van Hauter	4553
Michigan	Barry F. Walter	4005
Michigan	James L. Warner	1888
Minnesota	Calvin D. Ferber	612
Minnesota	Jack J. La Voy	3979
Minnesota	Lester G. Orton	363
Minnesota	James D. Vetter	3289
Mississippi	Gene T. Carroll	4800
Missouri	Jimmy M. Cook	5789
Missouri	Eugene L. Hoeltge	5077
Missouri	Lawrence M. Maher	7356
Montana	Dale Bond	4813
Montana	Donald A. Staves	1507
Nebraska	Kenneth Bellows, Jr.	5289
Nebraska	Earl Stiner, Jr.	3421
Nevada	Michael H. Musgrove	2350
New Hampshire	Robert W. Madigan	483
New Jersey	Henry J. Adams, Jr.	3525
New Jersey	Warren W. Hague	133
New Jersey	Joseph G. Retkovis	5579
New Mexico	Roland La France, Sr.	10124

New Mexico.....	Carlos J. Roybal	2951
New York.....	Anthony M. Ferrarese.....	16
New York.....	Arthur E. Koch, III.	6780
New York.....	Leonard J. Marciniak.....	6251
New York.....	Philip C. Schiffman.....	8691
New York.....	Vincent J. Siesta	546
New York.....	Domenick A. Volpe.....	546
New York.....	Harry C. Wurth.....	5253
North Carolina	William C. Cox.....	7383
North Carolina	A.G. Parker	8719
North Dakota	Robert G. Rudd	7564
Ohio.....	Gary B. Bentfeld	2799
Ohio.....	Joseph J. Ferencie	1863
Ohio.....	William W. Hawk	9381
Ohio.....	Thomas L. Kissell	9648
Ohio.....	Steven W. Mardis.....	693
Oklahoma	Ronald J. Slowik	2270
Oregon.....	Doyle E. Souders	2807
Pacific Areas	Donald O. Webster.....	9957
Pennsylvania.....	Neale H. Deibler	6493
Pennsylvania.....	Allen Q. Jones	21
Pennsylvania.....	George G. O'Brien	879
Pennsylvania.....	Frank J. Zenzer	676
South Carolina.....	William E. Pruitt	9509
South Carolina.....	Johnnie C. Robinson.....	2889
South Dakota.....	Walter F. Joynt	1273
South Dakota.....	Gary Knudson.....	2038
Tennessee	Earl E. Long	1618
Texas	Leonardo Barraza	9173
Texas	Glen M. Gardner, Jr.	3359
Texas	N.F. Layne	3990
Texas	Manuel O. Rivas.....	8782
Texas	David H. Slider.....	6441
Texas	Lavern H. Terbl	9168
Utah	Donald B. Myers.....	8307
Vermont.....	Philip A. Harnois	6674
Virginia.....	Claude J. Bradshaw.....	7589
Virginia.....	Joseph O. Longstreet.....	3219
Virginia.....	Bobby R. Walls	2216
Virginia.....	Melvin Webb	1115
Washington	Ronald L. Fry	379
Washington	Tommie B. Tindell	8889
West Virginia	Robert B. Kesling	573
Wisconsin.....	Russell V. Tauferner	8733
Wyoming.....	A.L. Ellefson.....	8473

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

Chairman: Arthur J. Fellwock, Past Commander-in-Chief, Indiana
Vice Chairman: Raymond R. Soden, Past Commander-in-Chief, Illinois

(Room 101AB, Midwest Express Center)

Department	Name	Post No.
Alabama	Travis W. Ledbetter	3016
Alabama	Lawrence O. Sepanski	4190
Alaska	Marcus S. Butler	10252
Alaska	Robert S. Green	1685
Alaska	Calvin E. Pope	9365
Arizona	Billie E. Stuart	549
Arkansas	Bobby G. Julian	6527
Arkansas	Lester R. King, Jr.	4554
Arkansas	Clarence L. Moore	5742
California	Willie D. Dorn	5394
California	Robert S. Hockenhull	2337
California	Vernon Hollins, Sr.	5394
California	Arthur A. Napiwocki	1614
California	David B. Norris	9009
California	James R. Rowoldt	10040
California	Philemon J. Velasquez	5059
California	John M. Warner	4851
Colorado	Emidie J. Mazzella	4051
Connecticut	Dale St Louis	574
Connecticut	Robert A. Stevens	10690
Delaware	Robert A. Mc Gowan	3257
Delaware	William T. Robbins	3420
Dist. of Col.	George A. Lange, Jr.	284
Dist. of Col.	Gerard P. Miserandino, Sr.	2979
Europe	Norman J. Hirschman	10658
Europe	Ronnie A. Wright	10775
Florida	Christopher M. Brewer	4407
Florida	Robert Shepherd	4864
Georgia	Gerald J. Piper	4583
Hawaii	Dennis M. Madeira	849
Hawaii	Francis X. Roddin	2875
Idaho	Alvin R. Mason	63
Idaho	Louis K. Nave	9425
Illinois	Maurice H. Kerckhove	2153
Illinois	Donald R. Smithenry	5520
Illinois	Vernon A. Soukup	7452
Illinois	Jules D. Spindler	4549

Indiana	Roger E. Baker	6841
Indiana	David G. Havely	864
Indiana	Eugene H. Kijanowski	717
Iowa	Daryl R. Shinker	2349
Kansas	Ronald G. Browning	846
Kansas	Buddy J. Haney	56
Kansas	Victor F. Malson	704
Kentucky	Jeff A. Phillips	1170
Kentucky	David G. Pruitt	5813
Latin Amer/Carib	Clifford P. England	3822
Latin Amer/Carib	David R. Miller	3876
Louisiana	Caylyn L. Rayburn	3619
Louisiana	Precilla Wilkewitz	4224
Maine	Rosemarie Lane	9459
Maine	Gilbert P. Levesque	1285
Maine	Donald W. Linscott, Jr.	1603
Maine	Arthur J. Roy	1603
Maryland	William E. Berry	6694
Maryland	Thomas E. Ryan	10080
Massachusetts	Charles E. Anderson	3439
Massachusetts	Joseph E. Caouette	1105
Massachusetts	Walter G. Gansenberg	834
Massachusetts	William J. Madera	1702
Massachusetts	Gardner Mc Williams	2425
Michigan	Larry A. Coleman	1888
Michigan	August J. Lucidi	1888
Michigan	Ernest E. Meyers, Sr.	4090
Michigan	John H. Pray	3243
Michigan	Dewey E. Stevenson	4406
Minnesota	Clint Bucher	5919
Minnesota	Robert E. Hansen	295
Minnesota	James R. Hesselgrave	5518
Minnesota	Larry G. Ziebarth	6843
Mississippi	Alvin D. Burchfield, Sr.	1983
Mississippi	William H. Long	6473
Missouri	Glenn E. Davis	4294
Missouri	Lawrence M. Maher	7356
Missouri	Robert O. Masters	5789
Missouri	Donald W. Watts	5553
Montana	Robert B. Magee	9250
Montana	Erich J. Maki	4198
Nebraska	Richard A. Strain	4959
Nevada	Frank R. Risewick	10047
New Hampshire	John A. Knapper	1772
New Hampshire	Alfred E. Sabatini	8546
New Hampshire	Robert L. Smith	808

New Jersey	Edward M. Kubas, Sr.	633
New Jersey	Edward J. Pajor.....	4374
New Mexico.....	William F. Festing, Jr.	3277
New Mexico.....	George A. Martinez, Sr.	401
New York.....	Charles Camillo, Jr.	416
New York.....	Elton C. Klein	478
New York.....	William E. Mc Garr	6196
New York.....	William J. Schmitz, Sr.	524
New York.....	Jack I. Simons	9217
New York.....	James A. Wilson.....	9132
North Carolina	James D. Chambers	7547
North Carolina	William J. Hendren.....	2031
North Carolina	Gene D. Kent.....	891
North Dakota	Richard J. Belling.....	7564
North Dakota	Richard N. Hagel.....	756
North Dakota	Wayne L. Paulson	753
Ohio.....	James Comedy.....	3383
Ohio.....	Robert W. Crow	4027
Ohio.....	Ronald D. Smith	7340
Ohio.....	Gerald J. Ward.....	5713
Oklahoma	James W. Bourdeau.....	9969
Oklahoma	Mark C. Richardson.....	4876
Oregon	Raymond K. Buhrmaster	2807
Oregon	H. Merle Jackson	4108
Pacific Areas	Thomas I. Elliott.....	2485
Pacific Areas	Kenneth W. Schaefer.....	2485
Pennsylvania.....	Benjamin Bowers.....	1690
Pennsylvania.....	John M. Gunn, Sr.....	2506
Pennsylvania.....	Almon J. Long.....	283
Pennsylvania.....	Joseph M. Salvo	5267
Pennsylvania.....	Albert S. Thomas, Jr.....	974
Rhode Island	Carmino M. Calvitto	1625
Rhode Island	Frank E. Lightowler	6342
South Carolina.....	Sanford W. Griffin.....	9138
South Carolina.....	Clyde M. Lindsay, Jr.	5932
South Carolina.....	Francis E. Simmons.....	9539
South Dakota.....	Harold H. Brost	3312
South Dakota.....	Daryl L. Halling.....	3164
South Dakota.....	Alvin Pistorius.....	3342
Tennessee	Charles Bearden, Jr.	1289
Tennessee	Wilburn Hastings, Jr.....	5019
Texas	Doyle D. Dey	8967
Texas	W.T. Evans	4372
Texas	John W. Glover	3359
Texas	Edward J. Krenek	8787
Texas	Clifford T. Teer.....	2148

Utah	Sanford L. Beshear	4355
Vermont.....	Merlin T. Doyle.....	8451
Vermont.....	James S. Forest	782
Vermont.....	Bradley F. Reynolds	798
Vermont.....	Larry W. Sweeney	9653
Virginia.....	Peter M. Snelling	2157
Virginia.....	James E. Tucker	10654
Virginia.....	Charles B. Wilkerson	9808
Washington	Edward L. Crockett	7815
Washington	David G. Davis.....	7815
Washington	Calvin C. Horman	11329
West Virginia	Ralph W. Honaker	1064
West Virginia	Ernest E. Imboden.....	9926
West Virginia	Melvin L. Reed	573
Wisconsin.....	C. Charles Arndt	8637
Wisconsin.....	J.R. Weber	5158
Wyoming.....	Ronald A. Steffensmeier	9439

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

Chairman: Thomas A. Pouliot, Past Commander-in-Chief, Montana
Vice Chairman: John W. Mahan, Past Commander-in-Chief, Montana
Vice Chairman: Eric G. Sandstrom, Past Commander-in-Chief,
Washington

(Room 103ABC, Midwest Express Center)

Department	Name	Post No.
Alabama	Gordon R. Shewmake.....	3016
Alaska.....	John P. Guinn	10041
Alaska.....	Melvin R. Sheppard	3836
Alaska.....	Leonard F. Smith.....	10252
Arizona.....	Richard H. Miller.....	1433
Arkansas.....	James F. Gilbert.....	4548
Arkansas.....	Harold N. Harris.....	2952
California.....	William H. Carvalho.....	344
California.....	Robert A. Crider.....	1744
California.....	Arthur L. Harris.....	5179
California.....	Robert J. Maxwell	1021
California.....	Willie Mc Cray, Jr.....	67
California.....	Michael J. Salome.....	3982
California.....	George M. Smith, Sr.	2122
California.....	Fred V. Vogler	7264
California.....	William C. White.....	1679
Colorado	George H. Palmateer	4171
Colorado	Richard Wellensiek.....	4171

Colorado	Warren E. Wellensiek	4171
Connecticut	Robert Cornell	1724
Connecticut	Howard C. Harris	9460
Connecticut	Donald A. O'Connor	9066
Connecticut	Ronald Rusakiewicz	9460
Delaware	Charles E. Price	3792
Delaware	John A. Smith	7447
Europe	Miguel A. Rios	2566
Europe	Ralph H. Van Der Wyst	10506
Florida	Robert P. Loftus	4643
Florida	John F. Lozanski	7674
Florida	Samuel D. Sweetman	5405
Florida	James E. Talbert	8093
Georgia	John E. Bogardus	5080
Georgia	Ray E. Brooks	2785
Georgia	Dan Bullard, III	658
Georgia	Robert K. Nelson	3200
Georgia	Billy W. Smith	4904
Idaho	Thomas E. Monson	63
Illinois	Norman J. Busch	1307
Illinois	Clyde F. Davis	1604
Illinois	George R. Lobb	3579
Illinois	Robert W. Migalich	4763
Illinois	Willie P. Nowlin	7975
Indiana	Steve L. Creasey	6574
Indiana	John E. Denton	7964
Indiana	Hillard D. Hiner	1421
Indiana	Arnold L. Marion	6606
Indiana	Daniel J. Newton	1342
Indiana	Frederick G. Packard	3790
Iowa	Clinton L. Hoferman	6172
Iowa	Le Roy I. Jenness	2253
Iowa	William P. Shannon	733
Kansas	Charles L. Brown	7437
Kansas	Lewie B. Cooper	1174
Kansas	Russell R. Cutright	1650
Kansas	Robert M. Davis	2709
Kentucky	William R. Coffey	5710
Kentucky	Ray Hensley	2921
Kentucky	Emmett C. Johnson	5662
Latin Amer/Carib	George T. Mitchell	11207
Louisiana	Charles A. Noakes	1736
Louisiana	Landry E. Saucier	1736
Maine	Thaxter S. Sedgwick	2499
Maine	John N. Trembley	3381
Maryland	Tomas F. Bunting	2562

Massachusetts.....	Theodore R. Eaton	2104
Massachusetts.....	Michael J. Gormalley.....	2016
Massachusetts.....	Eugene F. Hakala	1812
Massachusetts.....	William T. Mc Carthy.....	3439
Michigan	William P. Bennett	7573
Michigan	Robert G. Black	10168
Michigan	Cecil A. Mc Goon.....	2780
Michigan	Donald Mrdjenovic	7573
Minnesota.....	David L. Adams	1782
Minnesota.....	Daniel Bartholomew.....	3144
Minnesota.....	Patrick T. Bohmer	246
Minnesota.....	Donald E. Heuer.....	9433
Minnesota.....	Dean E. Means	1642
Minnesota.....	Stephen J. O'Connor.....	4114
Minnesota.....	John S. Staum	9625
Minnesota.....	Richard A. Zierdt	6587
Mississippi	Leslie C. Blanchard.....	6731
Mississippi	Hezekiah Brown.....	9732
Mississippi	Bobby Miller.....	4490
Missouri.....	Billy W. Kidd	1000
Missouri.....	Lawrence M. Maher.....	7356
Missouri.....	Donald L. Sutton	11041
Montana	Leslie E. Eskildsen.....	4067
Montana	Robert C. Smith	6774
Montana	Wade S. Smith	3831
Nebraska	Anthony J. Gallardo.....	131
Nebraska	John R. Gollihare	1504
Nebraska	Dwaine D. Wilson	1652
Nevada	Daryl L. Mobley	3630
Nevada	Pamela L. Robinson	10047
New Hampshire	Billy J. Floyd	1631
New Hampshire	John M. Lilly	1698
New Hampshire	Paul M. Mayette.....	5245
New Hampshire	Jerry A. Parenti	8546
New Jersey	Robert K. Bischoff	9691
New Jersey	Wayne A. Goldt.....	7856
New Jersey	Richard W. Holliday	7508
New Mexico.....	Eugene L. Chambers	1477
New York.....	Robert E. Barnhart	686
New York.....	Neil T. Connolly.....	7227
New York.....	Clyde A. Lewis.....	125
North Carolina	Michael T. Burris.....	2615
North Carolina	William C. Dohl	4309
North Dakota	Dale T. Ronning.....	7564
North Dakota	Gordon R. Thorson	7564
North Dakota	Robert L. Volk	1868

North Dakota	Theodore Will	1326
Ohio	John W. Ford	1042
Ohio	William A. Melott	66
Ohio	John Wasylik	2529
Oklahoma	Curtis O. Bohlman	1335
Oklahoma	Dean Derieg	4613
Oklahoma	Roderick V. Himber	4876
Oklahoma	Rebecca G. Mc Gary	1857
Pennsylvania	John A. Brenner	2493
Pennsylvania	Charles R. Feltenberger	2435
Pennsylvania	Ronald G. Herman	8951
Pennsylvania	Peter Krenitsky	6082
Pennsylvania	Franklin E. Lopes	92
Pennsylvania	Ronald G. Tyler, Sr.	1462
Rhode Island	Jean P. Arcand	2686
South Carolina	Melvin L. Emore	641
South Carolina	Frank M. Fogner	10804
South Dakota	Kenneth Jorgenson	750
South Dakota	Dennis G. Nelson	17
South Dakota	Larry L. Scudder	1273
South Dakota	Ronnie W. Bell	4862
Tennessee	Ramsey P. Locke	5066
Texas	Charles L. Cannon, Jr.	5076
Texas	Gailon K. Fletcher	3893
Texas	Alexander Vernon	9191
Texas	Bobby E. Whitworth	9299
Utah	Gary L. Fairman	8307
Utah	Elmer L. Zoltz	8307
Vermont	Wayne R. Chase	7779
Vermont	James H. Lane	6689
Vermont	John J. Zuba	1034
Virginia	Waynard E. Caldwell	4522
Virginia	Gerald E. Jonas	1811
Virginia	Larry A. Mattera	5500
Washington	Allen E. Bell	379
Washington	Robert G. Leroy	2995
West Virginia	Joseph G. Allesio	573
West Virginia	Earl E. Ross	1006
West Virginia	James E. Taylor	4326
Wisconsin	Wilfred A. Johnson	10544
Wisconsin	Jerrold A. Schultz	1318
Wisconsin	Curtis J. Taylor, Jr.	1318

COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Chairman: James R. Currieo, Past Commander-in-Chief, Arizona

Vice Chairman: Cooper T. Holt, Past Commander-in-Chief, Tennessee

SUBCOMMITTEE ON POW/MIA

Chairman: Billy Ray Cameron, Past Commander-in-Chief, North Carolina

Vice Chairman: John M. Carney, Past Commander-in-Chief, Florida

Department	Name	Post No.
Alabama	Roland L. Day.....	668
Alabama	George C. Vernon, Jr.	4722
Alaska.....	John W. Minnick.....	9365
Alaska.....	Robert S. Watchus	9365
Arizona.....	Frank V. Page.....	7968
Arkansas.....	A.M. Armstrong	2283
Arkansas.....	Harold F. Belote.....	2259
California.....	Benjamin Berroteran.....	4696
California.....	Rhett W. Daverio	3928
California.....	Thomas Dorsey.....	7041
California.....	Everett R. Martin.....	1732
California.....	Kenneth M. Murray.....	2075
Colorado	John R. Lewis.....	4051
Colorado	Joseph J. Santos.....	6461
Connecticut.....	Edward S. Banas	10004
Connecticut.....	Francis C. Brought	1672
Connecticut.....	Alfred W. Harrison.....	9929
Connecticut.....	Benjamin T. Lord, Jr.....	5095
Connecticut.....	Thomas C. Walker	5849
Delaware.....	Bobby J. Manning.....	7478
Delaware.....	Le Roy J. Rench	3238
Dist. of Col.	William W. Jones	341
Dist. of Col.	Benjamin F. Willis.....	9755
Europe.....	Richard F. Kennedy.....	9534
Europe.....	Robert E. Mann.....	10692
Florida.....	James W. Carlisle.....	10097
Florida.....	Charles W. Householder.....	5690
Florida.....	Donald L. Pierce.....	8696
Florida.....	John Uhrich, Jr.	10068
Georgia	Dick D. Dickens	6686
Georgia	Edward P. Grealish, Jr.....	3200
Hawaii.....	Zoilo A. Kupukaa.....	4951
Hawaii.....	Frederick A. Wong	8616
Idaho.....	Ray G. Maestas.....	6232
Illinois	Edward F. Jarnell, Jr.	8081
Illinois	Eugene J. Karban	7980
Illinois	Russell R. Rieke	5694
Illinois	Robert P. Witcher.....	7980

Indiana	George A. Thompson	286
Indiana	Eric R. Wendt	748
Indiana	David L. Zander	6841
Iowa	A. Arthur Weber	788
Kansas	Gerald F. Hamilton	7428
Kansas	Harold J. Maske	112
Kansas	Charles L. Shoemaker, Sr.	56
Kentucky	Thomas I. Blain	5421
Kentucky	John M. Mishler	5415
Latin Amer/Carib	Marion H. Lasater	3876
Latin Amer/Carib	Ruth D. Thomas	3835
Louisiana	James A. Johnson	3619
Maine	Peter F. Miesburger	9389
Maine	James M. Sawyer	6859
Maryland	Thomas V. Kimball, Jr.	10159
Maryland	Kenneth R. Ransdell	9619
Massachusetts	Michael J. Imbracsio	639
Massachusetts	John F. Leonard	639
Massachusetts	Walter F. Portrait	6712
Massachusetts	John J. Robarge	2425
Michigan	Roger W. Mays	2051
Michigan	James R. Pintar	6165
Michigan	Edward Sobolewski	4434
Michigan	Elmer J. Wurster	7546
Minnesota	Merlin O. Hanson	1639
Minnesota	Gordon W. Kirk	8854
Minnesota	Louie R. Mrozek	6316
Minnesota	Kenneth F. Peterson	1782
Mississippi	Dominic T. Leperi, Sr.	2434
Mississippi	Bernard Mc Clelland	2618
Mississippi	Allie Moreau	3937
Missouri	Charles C. Clifton	4347
Missouri	Jessie L. Jones	2657
Missouri	Frank J. Rick	6603
Montana	Larry H. Longfellow	1087
Montana	Bruce E. Mc Donald	1634
Nebraska	John W. De Camp	1652
Nebraska	Gerald L. Ludwig	7998
Nebraska	Bobby E. Nickels	3704
Nebraska	Billy C. Smith	7028
Nevada	Jerry H. Lazzari	3819
Nevada	Gene J. Pickering	10054
New Hampshire	Michael S. Annis	2860
New Hampshire	Roy H. Mc Cormack	11557
New Hampshire	Roland E. Miller	5791
New Hampshire	Robert T. St. Onge	8214

New Hampshire	Ernest A. Tucker	1698
New Jersey	William A. Goode	809
New Jersey	William R. Grieman.....	4247
New Jersey	George W. Higgs	10152
New Jersey	George J. Lisicki.....	2314
New Jersey	Jackie J. Shiverdaker	5579
New Mexico.....	Tyrone M. Benson.....	7686
New Mexico.....	Joe D. Salas	401
New York.....	Joseph F. Bernstein.....	7466
New York.....	Harold M. Burke, Jr.....	1895
New York.....	Melvin Garret	6396
New York.....	James F. Mc Nally.....	53
New York.....	Samuel C. Pilato	307
North Carolina	William Oxendine, Jr.	2843
North Carolina	Ashley V. Raper.....	2057
North Carolina	Elree T. Smith	10999
North Dakota	David A. Erbstoesser	1326
North Dakota	Gerald L. Lutman.....	3524
Ohio.....	George H. Cox	6772
Ohio.....	John E. Moon.....	2873
Ohio.....	Terry A. Roan.....	3124
Ohio.....	Craig D. Swartz.....	2947
Ohio.....	Fred Thompson, Jr.	2984
Oklahoma	Herman O. Allmendinger	1843
Oklahoma	Donald A. Firkins.....	9969
Oklahoma	Billie D. Mc Gill	1327
Oregon.....	Charles D. Fuller.....	966
Oregon.....	Manuel J. Huerta	4248
Pacific Areas	Gerald L. Kraus.....	3457
Pennsylvania.....	Glenn C. Dashner.....	464
Pennsylvania.....	Jack D. Frank	92
Pennsylvania.....	David E. Harbaugh, Sr.	33
Pennsylvania.....	Paul J. Kopp	8896
Pennsylvania.....	George Sarver, Jr.	402
Rhode Island	John Sivo	2396
South Carolina.....	Richard L. Copeland.....	10420
South Carolina.....	William J. Jolin	6087
South Dakota.....	Rick W. Barg.....	628
South Dakota.....	Lorne F. Ruzicka	3312
Tennessee	Eldrie Duf	4728
Tennessee	Kenneth R. Houston.....	1294
Tennessee	Otha M. Jack Kerr	5266
Texas	Ronald C. Hornsby	10428
Texas	William F. Mc Cord	7873
Texas	Arthur R. Richards	4010
Texas	George B. Sparkman.....	9181

Utah	Jack A. Mack.....	3586
Vermont.....	Michael F. Corrado	758
Vermont.....	Robert H. Dean	9653
Vermont.....	Richard M. Partington	5125
Virginia.....	Bruce R. Harder.....	1503
Virginia.....	C. Stan Hunter	1503
Virginia.....	George E. Mc Cracken.....	609
Washington	Thomas J. Asaif, Sr.	2995
Washington	George F. Riedel, Jr.	969
West Virginia	Robert J. Milby.....	6450
West Virginia	Marvin R. Nicholas.....	6669
Wisconsin.....	Peter J. Breed	10331
Wisconsin.....	Frank L. Capps, Jr.....	2336
Wisconsin.....	Thomas J. Tradewell, Sr.	6498
Wyoming.....	Robert J. De Bernardo.....	9439

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

Chairman: George R. Cramer, Past Commander-in-Chief, Illinois
Vice Chairman: R.D. Smith, Jr., Past Commander-in-Chief, Georgia

(Room 102AB, Midwest Express Center)

Department	Name	Post No.
Alabama	Ronnie D. Doege.....	5658
Alaska.....	Leander P. Carr	9978
Alaska.....	Gary L. Kurpius.....	10221
Arizona.....	Allen F. Kent	9972
Arizona.....	Leonard N. Kuczynski.....	3632
Arizona.....	Clarence J. Larson	9972
Arkansas.....	Martin O. Cowley.....	2259
Arkansas.....	James E. Ford, Jr.	3031
California.....	Judge Brow	7792
California.....	James A. Green	1622
California.....	Gerald M. Kohler	3045
California.....	John P. Wolfe	9223
Colorado	Keith D. Carter.....	4021
Colorado	Darrell D. Elliott	1771
Colorado	Robert L. Smith.....	4061
Colorado	Wayne J. Thompson, Jr.....	5061
Connecticut.....	Glenn N. Tewksbury	10362
Dist. of Col.	William L. Bradshaw	284
Dist. of Col.	Franklyn A. Malone	7358
Europe.....	Dale R. Nagan.....	10708
Europe.....	Stephen A. Ward.....	9781
Florida	James De Pass.....	10068

Florida	Paul Y. Goldych.....	4256
Florida	J. Douglas Morris, Jr.....	3559
Florida	Kenneth A. Thie	9272
Georgia	Richard Branson	5080
Georgia	Danny L. Gardner.....	2681
Georgia	James D. Randles.....	5257
Georgia	Lynn R. Wilcox	665
Hawaii.....	Richard L. Highley.....	7078
Idaho	Donald G. Riegel.....	889
Idaho	Dennis M. Waller	3043
Illinois	Paul J. Bezazian	8322
Illinois	Donald L. Porter	2055
Illinois	Edward A. Trennert	2255
Illinois	Emil Valent.....	1583
Indiana	Paul D. Curtice	1257
Indiana	David Lantz	1130
Indiana	Rex A. Lewis.....	9323
Indiana	James J. Thiel	717
Iowa	Jon M. Christenson	6779
Iowa	Donald F. Dickerson.....	1655
Kansas	A. Lynn Hall	6240
Kansas	Gerald R. Humbert	846
Kansas	Norman G. Staab.....	6240
Kansas	Larry F. Tyson	6957
Kentucky.....	Joe H. Humphrey, Jr.....	1170
Kentucky.....	Francis L. Wimsatt	5421
Latin Amer/Carib	Walter F. Griggs.....	3835
Louisiana	Larry W. Rivers	1736
Louisiana	Ernest A. Watson.....	11169
Maine	Paul S. Colburn.....	1761
Maine	Timothy P. Getz	3335
Maine	Raymond R. Lupo	1761
Maine	Charles H. Michaud.....	1285
Maryland	Carolyn L. Amos	9619
Maryland	George E. Creighton	8065
Maryland	William C. Dozier	9619
Maryland	Raymond M. Shipley	5370
Massachusetts.....	George J. Barrett.....	2394
Massachusetts.....	Roland W. Gendron.....	6643
Massachusetts.....	Gerald J. La Casse.....	697
Michigan	Kenneth J. Aune	6756
Michigan	Dale J. Brubaker	3941
Michigan	Wayne A. Buck	1888
Michigan	Eric L. Halvorsen	5065
Michigan	Arnold E. Huuki.....	6507
Michigan	Richard E. La Fave	5670

Minnesota.....	Timothy J. Collier.....	295
Minnesota.....	Donald L. Gates, Jr.	141
Minnesota.....	Harold Genrich	1222
Minnesota.....	Thomas L. Hanson.....	1639
Mississippi.....	Jerry W. Beard.....	3806
Mississippi.....	Marvell Lowery.....	10024
Missouri.....	Richard L. Hafner	5896
Missouri.....	George E. Hudson	4207
Missouri.....	Frederick H. Lotz	5525
Montana	James F A. Mc Gill.....	4042
Montana	Maurice J. Mills	2986
Nebraska	Robert E. Clark	4626
Nebraska	Gary C. Krause	2503
Nebraska	John R. Liebsack	2503
Nebraska	Gary C. Steckelberg.....	7419
Nevada	George Dennis	8250
Nevada	David B. Mason.....	10057
New Hampshire	Frank E. Casey, Jr.....	816
New Hampshire	Jon B. Le Clair.....	8497
New Hampshire	Francis M. O'Neil	1772
New Hampshire	John M. Packard.....	8546
New Jersey	Lawrence F. Berman	133
New Jersey	Patrick J. Botbyl.....	1593
New Jersey	Ralph Corno, Jr.	132
New Jersey	Frederick M. Gould	1593
New Jersey	Richard F. Moore	3509
New Jersey	James A. Nelson	493
New Mexico.....	Walter P. Diegnau.....	7686
New Mexico.....	Frederico Juarbe, Jr.....	401
New Mexico.....	Tobias Ortiz	2951
New York.....	T. William Bossidy	7466
New York.....	William J. Landers	8534
New York.....	George S. Smith.....	53
New York.....	Jack T. Smith	7227
New York.....	James H. Vinsonhaler.....	7127
North Carolina	Steve M. Jones	9337
North Carolina	Colon J. Warren.....	9103
North Dakota	Paul S. Aaberg.....	6139
North Dakota	Steven C. Frojen	9049
Ohio.....	Robert C. Cockrel	1082
Ohio.....	Keith E. Harman	3035
Ohio.....	Gary M. Pfaff	9473
Ohio.....	Barry M. Walker	4579
Oklahoma	Eugene H. George	9969
Oklahoma	Glenn O. Hughes	382
Oklahoma	Robert G. Sloat	3669

Oregon	Walter A. Langer	81
Oregon	Edwin L. Williams	10644
Pacific Areas	Charles A. Clay	1509
Pennsylvania	Howard L. Adler	456
Pennsylvania	William C. Allen	7213
Pennsylvania	Robert P. Gray	4963
Pennsylvania	Anthony J. Longo	5205
Pennsylvania	Charles R. Mc Cormick	402
Pennsylvania	Norman F. Rettig, Jr.	249
Pennsylvania	Archie T. Roberts	154
Rhode Island	John J. Barone	8955
Rhode Island	William G. Crawford	4487
Rhode Island	Michael J. O'Rourke	4487
South Carolina	George M. Pullie	6091
South Dakota	Walter P. Best	1273
South Dakota	Dale L. Jensen	628
South Dakota	Tom Sherman	3342
South Dakota	Glen V. Walters	628
Tennessee	Oscar E. Bailey	1618
Tennessee	Ronald N. Cameron	11160
Tennessee	John Furgess	1970
Tennessee	David J. Lopez	4895
Texas	William D. Bell	6873
Texas	Ted C. Connell	9192
Texas	R. Earl Lord	10351
Texas	William B. Moody	2034
Texas	James E. Nier	8919
Texas	Chuck E. Sinclair	8905
Texas	Ferrell E. Warden	8552
Utah	Russell D. Miller	8307
Vermont	Clifton E. La Plante	782
Vermont	Kevin T. Maloney	6689
Vermont	Leigh E. Tabor	9653
Virginia	Dennis M. Cullinan	7916
Virginia	Ernest B. Glynn	7327
Virginia	Douglas S. Hayes	647
Virginia	Michael J. Hoiness	4809
Virginia	John J. Mc Neill, Jr.	5412
Washington	Miles S. Irvine	379
West Virginia	Leonard L. Miller	2102
West Virginia	Willa R. Milliken	4326
West Virginia	Wesley J. Thomas	573
Wisconsin	Earl D. Banks	9403
Wisconsin	Gary J. Erickson	2344
Wyoming	Earl D. Sellers, Jr.	4343

COMMITTEE ON CREDENTIALS

Chairman: Richard Trombla, Post 1174, Kansas

COMMITTEE ON CONVENTION RULES

Chairman: Clifford G. Olson, Jr., Past Commander-in-Chief,
Massachusetts

Vice Chairman: James L. Kimery, Past Commander-in-Chief, New Mexico